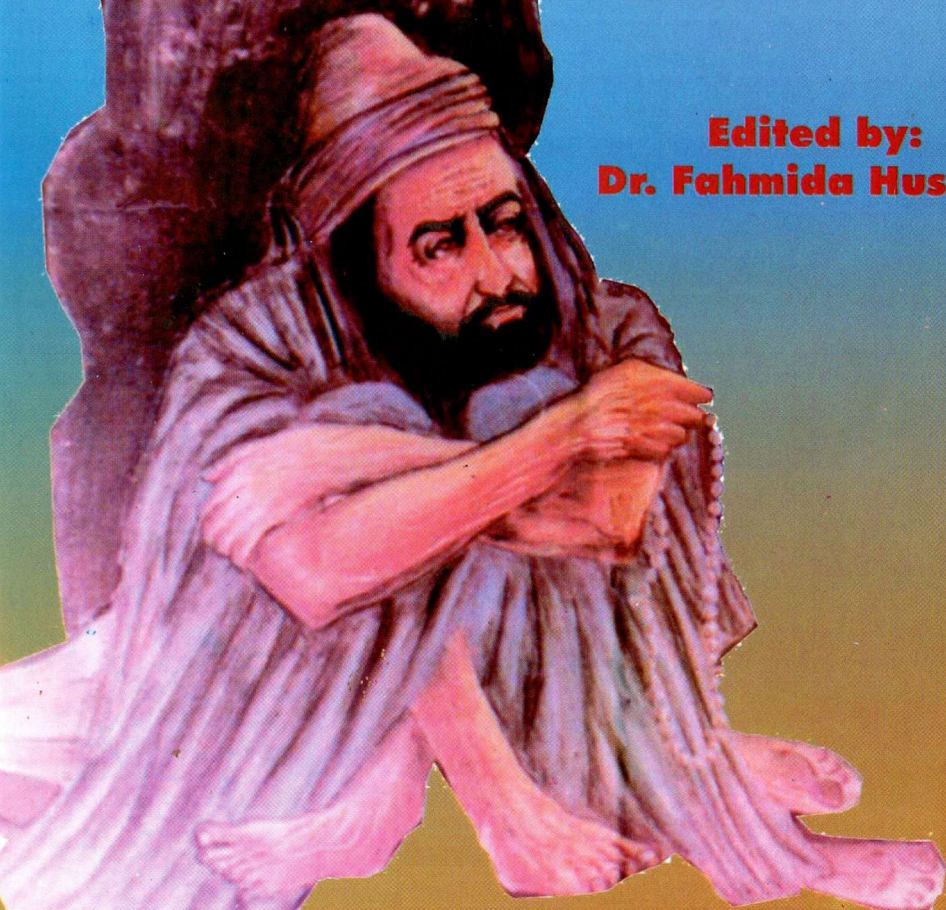
SOCIAL CONTENT
IN
SHAH-JO-RISALO
Translated by:
Anwar Pirzado
Edited by:
Dr. Fahmida Hussai
Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai Chair

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DEDICATION

To Shah Latif

Today my tears are flowing
For thee, for thee !
Yet in my soul is growing
A boundless ecstasy !
The song of thee
Whose every note
Is bound to harmony divine
That makes the world
With lustre shine;
Destroying every gloom
And rearing a rare bloom
The bloom of Truth and Beauty
That bringeth Bliss that hath no ending.
That makes the earth and heaven 'One',
A consummation that no bard hath done,
For you did point
Where mankind's suffering lay,
And with your poetic breath
You blew away Unreality
And let them see
Divine eyes of Eternity.

By Elsa Kazi

FOREWORD

The importance of literature lies in its deep and lasting human significance. A great book/work of art grows directly out of life and by reading it the reader is brought into relations with life, which in fact is the real power of literature. Poetry is fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of words. According to Plato the foundation of all good and lasting work in literature is entire sincerity to oneself, to one's own experience of life and to the truth of things as one is privileged to see it; and according to Carlyle, the very same quality of sincerity is the essence of all heroic greatness.

In order to evaluate this heroic greatness of a great book/work of art we should try to penetrate into the thought and feeling of the writer/the artist. The poetry of a great poet makes us fully aware of the complexity of life and opens up new fields of experience for us.

In this context if we want to realize the genius of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai in its wholeness and variety we should consider his Surs or musical themes (theme poetry composed according to musical modes) not separately but in their relation with one another, so that we may know the growth of his mind, the changes of his mood, temper, emotions and thought and also the influence of his experience in life.

We read his poetry without the slightest idea of sequence jumping from one sur to another, from Sur Marui to Sur Sasui and from Sur Dahar back to Sur Sarang and feel delighted at the variety of his subjects. But this is not the method of study by a literary critic. One has to study all his surs together because these are the diverse expressions of a genius, a classic and a great artist, so that he/she may compare and contrast them in content and concept, in method and style, keeping in mind the different periods of his life and his varying moods to relate them to the texture, matter and spirit of his Risalo.

According to Goethe, every man is a citizen of his age as well as of his country and since a nation's history has its shades and epochs of exaltation and depression, of struggle and disillusion, of belief and disregard for the sanctities of existence, Shah's individual manner of expression varies greatly from that of other poets in depicting the dominant spirit of the hour. Although great poets like Shakespeare, Ghalib and Shah Latif are generally said to be "not of an age but of all ages", but inspite of their universal appeal the fact remains that they could not escape "the spirit of the age" in which they lived. Thus Shah's poetry is a channel in which the energy of his age discharges itself, in its social content, in the political thought, philosophical aspect or the religious ideology.

It is for this reason that, we believe, study of Shah's poetry in its wholeness brings forth the diverse characteristics of an epoch of Sindh's history of politics, religion, culture, customs, philosophy and art.

By presenting the "Social Content in Shah Jo 'Risalo'" we intend to initiate a trend of sociological study with the conviction that poetry's relations to society are vitally important and that the investigation of social content in the poetry of Shah Latif, or any other poet for that matter, would strengthen the belief that art is not created in a vacuum and it is the work of an artist who is fixed in time and space, committed to a community of which he is an articulate part.

An eminent literary critic Harry Levin has stated, "the relations between literature and society are reciprocal, Literature is not only the effect of social causes, it is also the cause of social effects." This complex association is evident in the articles included in this volume which proves that the literature of a particular era is, not only, intimately and organically connected with its social back ground, but the great artist, the Shah of Sindh, has an un matched quality to relate it to all ages.

In the modern age, at the end of 20th century and 21st century only two years away, Shah's popularity among the literate as well as illerate masses of Sindh is an

indication of the fact that he transcends the limits of his generation and creates something which is of interest to the future generations too.

This volume comprises of articles by various well known scholars, critics and writers, originally written in Sindhi, translated into English by yet another writer and critic Mr. Anwar Pirzado. I strongly feel that these articles translated and put into the form of a book, may prove helpful to a wider circle of readers interested in the sociological study of the great poet of Sindh. It will be felt that little place is given to the sufistic aspect of Bhitai's poetry. This was purposely avoided in the selection of articles, as our desire throughout has been to make this anthology appear different from all the previous anthologies published earlier.

The validity of these articles by different authors depends on the belief that the character of Shah's poetry can be felt and appreciated by responding sensitively to the way in which he used words for expressing his ideas and emotions and also the impact of his philosophical yet artistic approach for revealing the truth about life!

It is hoped that this translation will enable those who do not know Sindhi, to understand better and appreciate the poet as well as the spirit of the times in which he lived. They will also be able to comprehend the liberal attitude of the poet on the political, social and ideological fronts, denouncing affinity with the value systems that encouraged exploitation.

I feel great pleasure in presenting this book, which I dedicate to the people who love Shah and his 'Risalo'.

Prof. Dr. Fahmida Hussain
Director,
Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai Chair,
University of Karachi.

Karachi,
August 31st, 1998.

Note: The poetic translation of different verses of Shah Latif have been taken from the translation of Ms. Elsa Qazi and Mr. Agha Yaqoob. Rest have been translated by Mr. Anwer Pirzado. Some of the articles are original (not translations)—such as that of Shaikh Aziz, K.M. Larik, and Mohammad Ibrahim Joyo.

PORTRAIT OF SHAH LATIF

Mohammad Ibrahim Joyo

THE PORTRAIT OF SHAH LATIF

The portrait of Shah Latif (1689 - 1752) created by Mohammad Ali Bhatti is a unique work of art. A great amount of study and research, a devoted purpose and reflection, must have gone in the creation of this portrait. It is serious work by a competent artists, done with an artistic simplicity and complexity besides artistic integration almost beyong words.

In the portraiture of Latif's physiognomy and enduring personality thus, and with the story of his character with such a significant insight, the artist has captured an immortal moment in the cultural history of Sindh.

The work depicts Latif as a human being pre-occupied with his life and destiny as affected by his physical, social and spiritual environment. Here before us, in this portrait, sits Latif, an individual, a saint , a rebel, reflecting upon the fate of human solitude, longing disconsolately, yet perennially, for that which could be genuinely good for man, which could even be universal and abiding.

A unique individuality of a human event in life's ceaselessly unravelling story of Sindh and its people has thus been depicted and exemplified by Mohammad Ali Bhatti, our young and visionary artist, in this matchless portrait of Shah Abdul Latif, the guardian spirit of Sindh and the most unfailing and wakeful friend and guide of its people.

The creation of this portrait of Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai is therefore, in itself, destined to be an immaculate and unfading mark of pride and honour in the ever-developing and self-enriching life and culture of Sindh and of the people of this ever felicitious land of Sindhu whom the poet himself has idealised in the following

ringing words:

نکا جهل نه پل نکو رائر ڏيهه ۾،

آڻيو وجهن آهرين روڙيو رتا گلَ،

مارو پاڻ امل، ملير ون مرڪڻو.

"Nakaa jhal-a, na pall-a, nako raa-er deh-a mein,

Aaniyo vijhan aahuriyen roariyo rataa gul-a,

Maroo paan-a ammul-a, Malir-aoon markano."

This could read in English thus:

No restrictions, no restrains

And no impositions in the Land either,

Freely they bring home red , beautiful flowers

Armfuls' of them,

Priceless people they,

Proud of their land,

And the Land proud of them.

Latif thus visualised almost a utopian future, a blissful future for both his land and its people.

Indeed, Sindh during Latif's times was awakening to a sense of nationhood and had to struggle for recognition and self-expression. Nearly two and a quarter centuries (152 0-1736) of foreign rule and tyrany of the savage Mangols - the Arghuns and Tarkhans, and the Mughals (who no doubt were all muslims), was just ending after a prolonged night of darkness and suffering, and the incessant flow of blood of her children was coming to a stop while Sindh attained freedom and unity and her people their independence and sovereignty.

Latif's "Risalo" which means the "message", represents that quest of Sindh's freedom and urge for national identity and self-expression. Latif was an exhortation to the people of Sindh for self-assertion and

self-discovery as a people. Latif's Risalo is therefore more a national classic than a religious or philosophic treatise. It is set forth as a tradition which emerged from the national life of Sindh, rooted in particular in the two of her most glorious periods of history - the Soomras and Sammas, covering nearly seven centuries (from mid-ninth century to 1520 A.D, the great formative periods of her socio-cultural identity.)

Latif's poetry has its literary excellence and Sufistic credo beyond measure and description, and it has its artistry and methodicalness too. But above all, it is a source of strength for the people of Sindh, as it also marks the full extent and maturity of their language as an emblazoning saga of their life and spirit through the ages.

Languages are miracles of nature and some entirely unique phenomenon of human history. Emergence of a language ipso-facto meant emergence of a people, a socio-cultural collectice, a centre of power and authority. And then when time came for God too, or for some godly voice to speak to a people in their language, they from that point of time onwards simply did not accept living as a second class people or as a nation less equal among the nations. Poland and Ireland were the modern history's two most remarkable instances of this kind, and if any instance nearer at hand was needed, that too enacted itself recently right in the midst of us and before our eyes.

Latif thus has provided us with a haven, a refuge, and a vitalism which ressurect peoples and nations to life and save them in times of the wildest of crisis - the haven being the language and the vitalism being the message. Let us therefore take to the haven and hold fast and pay our heed to the message—The linguistic bond of support and unity and equality among nations, the identity and peaceableness in the interests of justice and common good of all.

Says Latif :

سَبائين سدائين كرين متي سنڌ سڪار،

دوست مٺا دلدار عالم سڀ آبا ڪرين.

" Saaeen sadaa-een kareen mathay Sindh sukaar,

Dost-a mithaa dilda'ar, aalam sabh-u aabaad kareen".

(Oh God, let Sindh prosper !

Oh Gracious Friend, let nations prosper !)

He says again :

جان تون ساقي آهين، وٿي وچ مَ وِجهه،

جود تنهنجو جکرا، آهي سانئين سِج،

نينهن پيالو نِجُ، خاص ڏج کُهين کي.

"Ja'an toon sa'aqi a'ahiyen, vithi vich ma vijh-u,

Jood tuhinjo Jakhra, aahay saani sijj-u,

Neenh-an piyalo nijj-u, khaas dijj khuhiyan khe."

In English it could read :

So long you are the cup-bearer,

Let the cup not be intercepted and held up'

Your distribution, Oh master of the tavern

Is like that of the sun,

Take the cup of love and give it

Particularly to those deprived and weak !

If we even today respond to this godly message of "equality among nations" and "avoidance of interceptions" ensuring free flow of " the cup of love and sustenance" among all, in the interests of peace, justice and common good, we shall be redeemed and saved - not after death but even during death - we, i-e not only we in Sindh and others in Pakistan, but all the peoples and nations of the world, threatened by imperialisms, national and foreign, and the whole of mankind, threatened by what a Sunday Magazine,

the Miami Herald's columnist, Gene Weingarten has termed, "the most terrible technology of all", the Thermo-Nuclear technology.

Latif's Risalo which again I say means his "Message", can indeed work like what the columnist. has termed as " the lever inside the coffin" to enable us all, if afterall we are not dead, to open the coffin's lid and tear apart the shroud and get out. And it also is , again in the columnist's terms, "the breathing aperture" inside the coffin, so that we would not suffocate before operating the lever or tearing the shround open to regain our access to free air and our right to survival.

Let us therefore, on our part atleast , remember always that Sindhi, our mother-tongue in which the godly voice of Latif has been heard by us , is the "lever", and his call and exhortation to us for self-assessment and self-realisation as a people is our "breathing aperture". Let us then unite in our devotion to our land and our language, and finding strength in unity, struggle for equality among nations and for a state of bliss on earth sans interceptions of all kinds, providing love and sustenance in just and equal measure to all. This is the very least we can do as our homage to Latif, our wise teacher and loving friend.

Says he to us :

ستا اٿي جاڳ ننڊ نہ ڪجي ايتري،

سلطاني سهاڳ ننڊون ڪندي نہ ملي.

" Suttaa uthee jaag-u, nind-a na kajay etree,

Sultatani suhaag-u, nindoon kanday na milay ".

Oh you who are asleep, arise !

Sleep so long and entire will not do;

The fruit and felicity of sovereign life

None has enjoyed while sleeping !

Let us then heed Latif's wise message and hitch our

wagon to the star and sprint along. May we never forget that Latif, the soul of Sindh, its life-breath, the universal poet, and yet our own poet, is sitting here in the gallery of our great heroes, thinking of us and mediating on our fate, and watching us as to what we are doing about it.

G. M. Syed

POLITICAL PERCEPTION OF BHITAI'S POETRY

Very little is known about the times of Shah Latif, but whatever is known about the social environment prevailing in the last decade of the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century A.D. suggests that by then the political culture , as it manifests today, was still in the making, while the political ideologies were not as yet well defined.

In Sindh the system of autocracy reigned supreme. The literacy rate was very low. The indigenous folk had not, as yet, begun to accept the influence of western culture. The modern system of constituting assemblies, inducting ministries, holding elections, seeking votes on political manifestos and founding political parties based on well defined political principles was an unknown phenomenon in Sindh. The doctrines of socialism, nationalism, pan-Islamism,capitalism, fascism and communism were still in the making. The system of feudalism and theocracy only reigned in Sindh.

No doubt, the political philosophies were not in the present order, yet the essence of the matter was very much there. The miserable state of peasantry and the clutches of feudalism created an urge for something like socialism.

The foreign invasions of Sindh, the usurption of peoples' rights and suzerainty of aliens over the land and the people gave impetus to resistance by the locals. Such phenomenon was bound to create an atmosphere of nationalism in Sindh. The valiant wars fought by the Soomras and Sammas against foreign invasions and the epic poetry composed by the poets in praise of the saviours of Sindh created justification for the political ideology of nationalism in Sindh.

The manifestation of Pan Islamism was visible in

the religious movements launched by Syed Mohammad Miran Joonpuri and other Muslim religious leaders. The support advanced by Qazi Qazan to Shah Beg Mohammad Arghun is also counted as a part of such phenomenon.

The system of capitalism which is still not developed in Sindh on the pattern of the West, had its traces in Sindh in the form of a sort of fascism. The foundations of fascism are quite visible in the rule of Kalhoras in Sindh. As it is defined, fascism concentres the vested interests of some who usurp the rights of many and impose their sway over them by force thereby compelling them to live under their subjugation. Thus there were clear indications of the prevailing basis of fascism in Sindh during the Kalhora reign.

The fascist practice of forcible implementation of extremist religious verdicts pronounced by Mohammad Hashim Thatavi, the orders of assassination of Shah Inayat Sufi and Mian Abdul Rehman of Khuhra for their non-conformist stand, compulsion of growing specific type of beard by men, wearing trousers of muslim-style by the Hindus, restrictions imposed on various rituals of Hindus in Sindh and certain other curbs on womenfolk manifested the fascist perception of the theologists of the times.

The ideology of communism was still in a state of evolution, however, its traces were very much there. The existence of the downtrodden masses and their exploitation in the multi-party system of the government created justification for an urge for revolution. Therefore in my opinion Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai's political perceptions were such that :

1. He was an exponent of Nationalism.
2. He favoured Democratic order.
3. He liked Socialistic conception.
4. He was not an exponent of Pan Islamism.
5. He was an opponent of Dictatorship and Fascism.
6. He hated the Bourgeois system.

Now I shall quote from the Risalo to prove my hypothesis pertaining to the political perception of Shah Latif:

1. Nationalism :

In my opinion Shah's Sur Marui is a treatise of nationalism if studied in consonance with love for the land and the spirit of patriotism embedded in the character of Marui. There are numerous other factors and evidences to prove that Shah was an exponent of Sindhi nationalism.

2. Democracy :

It is an undeniable fact that Shah Latif was a friend of the downtrodden masses, the deprived souls and the poor ones. Besides, he stood for the unity of the masses because he knew that only through united effort they can achieve their rights and an honourable status in the society. He felt pain at the state of disunity among the poor. It was due to this feeling that he cited the example of the flock of the birds who walk and fly together. He wanted to make the human beings realise that they lack that sense of unity which even birds possess by virtue of their nature.

He says :

وڳر ڪيو وتن پرت نہ ڇنن پاڻ ۾،
پسو پکيئڙن ماڻهئا ميٺ گهڻو.

" Wagar-a kayo watan prit na chhinan paan-a mein,

Paso pakhiaran, maarhuhaa meth-u ghanoon".

"They in convoys travel ever,

Their connections never cut -

Not like men their kinship sever,

Oh, behold the loving birds. "

In one of his verses, Shah Latif addresses the masses and tells them that after forging unity for the progress and development of the nation, any attempt for

disunity among their ranks was detrimental to the very interests of the greater masses.

ڌڻ ڌارڻ، ڌار رهڻ، ايءَ نہ سنگهارن سٽ،
ڪاهي ايندا ڪڏهين متي وانڍ وهٽ،
جي هاڻون هونئي مِٽ، تہ بہ اڍڪو لاهہ مَ ان جو.

" Dhan dhaaran, dhaar rahan, ee-a na sanghaaran sitt-a,

Kaahay eendaa kadaheen, mathay waandh-a vahit-a,

Je haanoon hoon-aee mitt-a, tab-i udako laah-e ma unn jo ".

"It is not the custom or tradition of the shephards to keep away from their herds. They would sooner or later bring their herds to graze. Remember, even if the robbers are in your kinship, you must not forget about any possible onslaught by them.

When Bhitai witnessed the state of disunity among his people, he knew that the main causes of their poverty and weakness were the predominance of the feudals,the hatred and prejudice spread by the clergy and the vested interest of the Pirs(the so called spiritual guides) etc. So he laments over such state of affairs and says symbolically :

ڪانا منجهہ قرار هُئا هيڪاندا سنگ ۾،
ڳاهي ڳاهہ فراق جي ڪيا ڌارو ڌار،
نہ ڄاڻان ٻيهار ڪيِر ملندا ڪندشين.

"Kaana manjh qaraar , huwa hekaanda sang-a mein,

Gaahay gaah-a firaaq je kaya dharo dhaar-a,

Na janaan beehaar-a, ker-i milandaa kin seen ".

" The grains were intact and united in the plant of the crop. But at the time of harvest, they were separated, scattered. And now there are no chances of those grains come together again".

Underlining the need of unity and struggle, Shah

says in one of his verses, " If you want to reap the crop of the rainy season, get united with other herdsmen. Thus your herds would never have danger from any corner".

In Sur Sorath-Rai Diyaach, Shah makes it crystal clear that the common men ,if united, can bring down the crowns of the kings. In this context he refers to the mission of Beejal who plays at the string and takes away the head of King Rai Diyaach as a reward for his fascinating music. Thus he symbolises the musician as commonfolk who have the power of bringing down even great empires.

Addressing a compatriot in isolation or the one in exile, Shah while symbolising the swan with man says : " "How come you have forgotten your flocks, O, Swan ! Why the murmer of your mates does not kill your heart".

3. Socialistic conception :

Shah Latif was, basically a friend of the poor and the deprived classes. He therefore desired unity among the have-nots. In Sur Sa'arang, he has wished for the prosperity and progress of the poor. He never prays for the affluent class. When he wants rains in abundance, he has in his mind the condition of the pastoral people—the people of Thar. He wants them to flourish and prays for their prosperity.

" Season's orchestra's in full swing,
Clouds move up , near and far;
The grain is cheap, and brimful now
Of butter is each jar -
Rust that my heedless heart did mar,
This God-reminder cleansed."

Shah Latif is desirous of the revolution which brings economic prosperity and independence for the people. Such a revolution benefits the peasant class of the people, the downtrodden or the deprived classes of the society.

اڄ پڻ اتر پار ڏي، تاڙي ڪئي تنوار،

هارين هر سنڀاهيا، سرها ٿيا سنگهار،
اڄ پڻ منهنجي يار وسڻ جا وس ڪيا.

Aj pin uttar-a par-a de taạre kaee Tanwaar,
Hare-un har-a sambhaayaa sarhaa thyaa sanghaar,
Aj pin muhinje yaar, wasan jaa wes-a kayaa.
" Season's orchestra's in full swing,
Rain-quails pipe tenderly,
Peasants repair their ploughs,
Herdsmen rejoice with ecstasy -
My friend in perfect form . . .
O, see predicts a downpour great !"

Shah Latif was a great opponent of the profiteers, hoarders, misers and those who multiply their gains at the cost of the poor people. There are many verses in his Risalo calling for an end to such an exploitation of the poor masses by the rich. He believes that the rain of the real economic independence can avert such catastrophe for the commonfolk.

حڪم ٿيو بادل کي تہ سارنگ ساٿ ڪڄن،
وڄون وسڻ آيون ٺهہ ٺهہ مينهن ٺمن،
جن مهانگو لهي ميڙيو، سي ٿا هٿ هڻن،
پنجن مان پندرنهن ٿيا، اٺن ٿا ورق ورن،
ڏڪاريا ڏيهہ مان، شل موذي سڀ مرن،
وري وڏي وس جون، ڪيون ڳالهيون ڳنوارن،
سيد چئي سين، آهہ توهہ تنهنجي آسرو.

Hukm thyo baadal-ạ khe, ta saarang-a saath-a kajan,
Wijoon wasan-a aayoon, tah tah meenhan timan,
Jin mahaango lahee meryo, sė thaa hath-a hanan,
Dukaarya deh-a maan moozee shal sabh maran,

Waree wade was-a joon, kayoon gaalhyoon ganwaaran,

Sayed chae sabhin, aahi toh-a tunhjee aasro.

" Cloud was commanded : "Rain must come",

And cloud obeyed so fain -

Lightnings arrived, rain pattered, poured,

Came to remain and reign;

The hoarder who for dearness hoped

Now wrings his hands in vain,

Five multiplied to fifteen; so

The page has turned again.

The profiteer may disappear

And cause no longer pain . . .

The kine-herds sit together now,

Relating tales of rain -

O God, who happiness would gain,

Must on thy grace rely !"

The poet felt pain while witnessing miserable condition of the commonfolk. He always prayed in verses for their better life.

He has portrayed life of the poor fisherfolk of Sindh, in particular, in Sur Kaamod.

ککيءَ هاڻيون کاريون، ڇڇيءَ هاڻا ڇڄ،

پاندُ جنين جي پاند سين، لڳو ٿئي لڄ،

سمو ڄام سهجَ، ايو کري ان سين.

Khikhee-a haanyoon khaaryoon, chhichhee-a haana chhaj-a,

Paand-u jineen je paand-a seen lago thye laj-a,

Samo Jam-u sahaj-a, ubho kare un, seen.

" The basket full of smelling fish,

and all the loaded herring-trays ---

Fishers,whose touch avoided is

and such unpleasantness conveys

The King stands in their thatch always

and gently holds converse with them !"

کاڄ جنين جو ککيون، مال جنين جا مڏ،

سمي سيئي سيڻ ڪيا، هيڻ جنين جا هڏ.

Khaaj-u jineen jo khikhyoon maal-a jineen jaa mad-a,

Samen se-ee sen-a kaya heen-a jineen jaa had-a.

"Those who do feed on smelling fish;

and fish is all their property __

The King, the noble King, O see !

with them relationship has made __ "

The character of Jam Tamachi is symbolised by Shah Latif in his Sur Ka'amod as a genuine leader of the masses. He has no complex of his royality or nobility and is roaming amongst the poor fisherfolk. The damsels belonging to royal pedigree are overlooked by him and he chooses one of the fisherwomen who belongs to low-caste poor people in a society of class-conscious people.

هٿين پيرين ارکٿين، مـه نـه مهاڻي،

جيئن سگو منجهه سرندڙي، تيئن راڻين ۾ راڻي،

اصل هئي ان کي اهل چاماڻي،

سمي سڃاڻي، پيڙو وڌس پانهن ۾.

Hathen pereen arkhanen, muhan na muhaanee,

Jeen-a sago manjh surandare, teenaa raniun mein raanee,

Asil huee un-a khe ahil-a jaamaanee,

Same sunjaanee beero widhus baanhan mein.

" Her hands and feet, her face and form

no more of fisher-maid remind _

As there's a chief-string in the lute

she is queen of all the queens combined;

From the beginning all her ways

were queenly, noble and refined,

The King perceived it and did bind

the regal bracelet on her wrist !"

Jam Tamachi has no time for the noble princes but is found always amongst the fisherfolk of Keenjhar lake. He thus alloted all property rights of the lake to the poor fisherfolk.

نوريءَ جي نوازيو، ٿيو تماچيءَ تي،

ڳاڏي چاڙهي گندري، ماڻهو ڪئو مي،

ڪينجهر چوندا ڪي، تہ سچ سڀائي ڳالهڙي.

Nooree-a je nawaazyo, thyo tamaachee-a te,

Gaade chaarhe gandree, maanhoon kayo me,

Keenjhar chundaa ke, ta sach sabhaaee gaathree.

"Credit of raising fisher-maid

belongs to Tamachi,

He took her in her carriage, and

a human being he

Made out of her, . . . in Keenjhar,see !

All say this is the truth."

ڪوءِ سميون، ٻن سومريون! جي اچن اوچي ڳات،

ور سي ڪينجهر ڄائيون! جن تماچيءَ تات،

راڻين ملا رات، ماڻڪ مي پرائيو.

Kho-i Samyoon ban Soomryoon, je achan uche

gaat-i,
War se keenjhar jaaiyoon, jin Tamachee-a tat-i,
Raaniun mulaa ra'at-i, maanik me piraayo.
" Fie upon maids of princely caste
who walk stiff-necked, so haughtily _
Praise to the daughter of the lake,
her true love to the King gave she . . .
Out of all royal ladies, he,
the pearl bestowed on fisher-maid."

4. Pan Islamism :

Right from the beginning a section of muslims in the world has been striving hard for establishing muslim hegemony over the world because they believed that muslims were the best lot and thus destined to rule over the globe. For establishing Caliphate rule, the titles of Caliph and Mehdi were pronounced. The modern version of this theory is Pan Islamism.

According to one of the versions of the ideology of Pan Islamism, one has to follow the conception of Jehad for muslim hegemony and superiority over all other human beings. But if it is believed so, then the fundamental principles of Islam such as peace, equality and democracy are to be abandoned.Due to this contradiction all Sufis had been opponents of this ideology.

Shah Latif believed in the philosophy of " Wahdatul Wujood ", therefore he was against such religious perception. He also knew that orthodox clergy, having such a biased thinking, had only contributed in damaging the image of Islam in the eyes of the people of the world. The exponents of Pan Islamism have been undermining the utility of Islam through their narrow-mindedness and have thus only caused damage to Islam.

پريان جي يار جي مـــڙيـئـي مـــنـــائـــي،
ڪـانـهـي ڪـڙائـي چـڪـين جي چـيـت ڪري.

Piryaan je paar-a jee mire-ee mithaa-ee,

Kaanhe Karaa-ee, chakheen je chet kare.

" Whatever comes from Him is sweet,

That is not bitter or sour

If you taste it by heart ."

In his opinion all religions were like different paths leading to the same holy destination. So, Shah Latif never believed in such a verssion of this ideology more so because it is a form of fascism.

5. Opposition to Dictatorship :

An order of a society in which there are no personal liberties and the power rests with a few who either in their personal or class interest use it arbitrarily and impose their decisions and actions on the masses forcibly, is called Fascism or Dictatorship. The ideology of dictatorship is directed against the free will of the people and is a sort of a rival to the ideology of democracy.

Shah Latif who was an exponent of the unity of the downtrodden could never accept such an ideology. Secondly every Sufi happens to be a champion of peoples' personal liberties so much so that many thinkers of the sort have turned to be called anarchists in their pursuit of their unflinching faith in the personal liberties of human beings. They oppose high-handedness and tyrany of all sorts whether related to religion or society.

Addressing fascists and dictators , Shah Latif has symbolically said :

" O killer ! you may die

And your weapons may perish

As you have created separation of years

In our companionship".

And when those powerful people become more powerful and start crushing emotions of their subjugated

masses under their feet, Bhitai says symbolically :

متو آهين مڇ ٿلهو ٿيو ٿونا هٽي،
تو جا ٻانئين اڇ تنهن پاڻيءَ پنا ڏينهڙا.

Mato aaheen machh-a, thulho thyo thoonaa haneen,

To jaa bhaaeen achh-a, tahin panin-a punaa deenharaa.

" O fish, you grew so over-fat,

Butting against all you met;

Expanse of water now has set _

Dried is what once you saw. _"

6. Anti - bourgeois :

I believe that Shah Latif's tilt was towards socialism therefore he was bound to oppose the system in which his compatriots who were poor were to remain poor , shelterless, half-naked and nomads while a few affluent ones could enjoy all charms of life.

Depicting the character of Marui, Shah Latif makes it clear that Marui never desires for personal gains but struggles for the collective good of the people of Thar. She says,

آءٌ ڪيئن سوڙيين سمهان، مون ور گهاري ولهه.

aa-oon kee-an sawren sumhaan moon war-u gha'are wilh-a.

" how could I accept luxurious bed when my compatriots are shivering in severe cold for want of quilts. And she equally rejects palacial luxuries of of king Umar Soomro saying that:

پکن جي پريت ماڙين سين نه مٽيان.

Pakhan jee preet maariun seen na matyaan.

" I will not exchange my love for the straw huts with the palaces of the king ".

Shaikh Ayaz

PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECT OF SHAH LATIF'S POETRY

It is a great privilege for me to have been invited to preside over this session of the "Philosophy Congress" devoted to the great name of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, who is the greatest poet of my homeland.

It is my fortune that today I am paying tributes to the memory of the poet who has become a metaphor of my soul, whose thoughts have proved to be the beacon light for my consciousness and whose songs vibrate in every beat of my heart.

It is not myself alone, each and every particle of the soil of Sindh is sparkling under this shining sun. From cradle to the grave, the thrill of Shah Bhitai's voice vibrates within us.

Before I trek down the path of Shah Bhitai's philosophical thoughts, I intend to point out an inconsistency, a folly which is tantamount to our national misfortune. We usually do not become aware of our achievements until pinpointed by some foreigner's eye. This malaise of ignoring genius exists in the whole of Asia in particular.

We could only comprehend the eternity of Omar Khayam's art when Fitz Gerald introduced him. Kalidas was introduced by Max Muller. In the same way our eyebrows were raised at the greatness of Shah Latif and Tagore when Sorley and Yeats attempted to measure these fathomless seas. Shah Latif, in particular, was kept within the local periphery for long inspite of the fact that as a poet he lived outside geographical boundaries.

I think it is necessary to point out here that the language only happens to be an attire for the thoughts while the guise undergoes changes often. Therefore any language

having translation of Shah would definitely provide new heights to the thought and content of his Risalo.

Our languages have attained growth by absorbing thoughts of other philosophers and thinkers from Plato to Einstien and from Homer to T. S. Eliot. If we don't broaden the base of our languages, we would be losers in the end. For that matter we will have to comprehend and appreciate other thinkers too. It is here that the West has attained superiority on us.

It is the irony of our fate that we never endeavour to identify ourselves until others lure us to do so. Perhaps it is due to some inferiority complex, which is the result of the state of slavery we have lived in for centuries. The lack of self-confidence and self-analysis is one of the factors responsible for the decline of our civilization. It is beside the fact that every great man leaves behind the traces of his greatness in one way of the other.

Allama Iqbal had said:

من نوائے شاعرِ فردستم۔

"Mann nawai sha'ar-e-fardastum".

And Ghalib had said:

لوح جہاں پہ حرفِ مکرر نہیں ہوں میں۔

"Loh-e-Jahan pe harf-e-muqarar naheen hoon mein".

Mir had said:

افسوس تم کو میر سی صحبت نہیں رہی۔

"Afsos tum ko Mir se suhbat naheen rahi".

So, despite our aquaintance with Shah Latif for the last two hundred years, we could not perceive the secret of his greatness even by the metaphor he created in his poetry.

For it we had to be grateful to Dr. H. T. Sorley.

Shah Latif had once said about his verses:

بيت مَ ڀانئيو ماڻهئا، آيتون آهين،

نيو من لائين پريان سندي پار ڏي.

Bait-a ma bhaanyo maanhwaa, Aayatoon aaheen,

Nyo man Laaeen piryaan sande paar-a de.

"Mere abiyaat par ma'ani ki kiya ba'at,

Shagufta soorat-e-Ayaat-e- Quraan,

Dil-e-insaan pe khulte je rahe hein,

Ramooz-e-ma'arifat, israr-e- irfaan."

-- (Tr. in Urdu by Shaikh Ayaz)

The Poetry of Shah Latif, even today, happens to be the mirror of "Ramooze-e-ma'arifat" and "Israr-e-Irfaan" (secrets of truth and knowledge). We simply require an eye which could penetrate into the mirror to know about the truth.

The base of Bhitai's philosophy is mysticism - the Tassawuf. The relationship between mysticism and philosophy is the relationship between the intellectual sublimity and the brain. The attainment of the one is possible through ecstasy while the other is possible through rationale of the mind. However, right from Aristotle and Socrates, to Muhiuddin Ibn Al-Arabi and Imam Ghazali, the mutual relationship of mysticism and philosophy brings forth both the intellect and the mind to the same level. In Islamic mysticism, espacially, the philosophy seldom remains as a separate entity. Here both amalgamate to become one and the same.

Shah Latif, who was both a great poet as well as a great musician, had amalgamated his ecstasy and the rationale in a powerful combination of poesy and music creating oneness, replacing dualism. This has created a

unity in the diversity of thought. His philosophical and mystic thought has been textured which such oneness of rhythm that it contains all beauty of diversified colours as well as thrust of all emotions put together. The different levels of perception are manifested explicitly in such oneness as if a number of rivers were emptying into a fathomless ocean.

The personality of Shah Latif is complete in its totality. Sindhi poetry, from the last two and half centuries, has been under the influence of his authority. The exigencies of time have never severed our links with that great genius. The poetry pertaining to the outstanding issues of the present as well as perception about the future, travels step by step with us as wild scent. In this fast changing world, where values of the past have been shattered drastically, the conception of life as advanced by Bhitai has the same appeal as it had about two centuries ago.

Maulana Ghulam Rasool Mahar has indicated a vital factor about the birth of Shah Latif, in one of his articles.

"Shah Sahib was born in 1101 A.H.(i.e. 1689 A.D.) Thus his birth took place in the beginning of the 12th Hijra. According to the common belief, those born at the turn of a century happen to be the 'Mujaddid' of the time. Whether anyone likes to regard Shah Latif as 'Mujaddid' or not by virtue of the term, it is indisputably a fact that he immortalised Sindhi language in his poetry. His teachings concentred on eternal reality. Such poetry owing to its universal truth, survives, irrespective of the implications of time and space. Such poetry doesn't address to the lettered only but appeals to people all over the world at all times. Such poets make the norms of an ideal man and make human beings out of social animals. They incorporate all those qualities in people for which God has been sending prophets on the earth".

If analysed in the light of above excerpt, the personality of Shah Latif, with reference to his times and poetry is:

پیغامبری کرد و پیمبر ناتوان گفت۔

"Peghambari kard wa pember natwa'an guft".

Allama Iqbal has said about his poetry, :

میری نوائے پریشاں کو شاعری نہ سمجھ،

کہ میں ہوں محرمِ رازِ درونِ میخانہ۔

"Meri nawa-e-pareshan ko sha'iri na samajh,

K-e mein hoon muharam-e-ra'az-e-daroon-e-maikhana."

Shah Sahib too has narrated the secrets of life and the intricacies of the universe, for which he made his poetry a vehicle.

In the words of Mir:

کیا تھا شاعری کو پردہ سخن کا،

وہی آخر کو ٹھہرا فن ہمارا۔

"Kiya tha shaa'eri ko parda sukhun ka,

Wohi a'akhir ko thehra fann hamara."

So, like all great poets, Shah Latif also enriched his art with the great thoughts of other men of letters.

The art of expression and the diction, with which Shah Latif has blessed Sindhi poetry, is unique in the sense that the interwoven words seldom manifest any trace of darning. The words, phrases and metaphors used in his poetry have been picked up from the lap of this soil. He incorporated the history and culture of his land into his self, peeped into the hearts of the people inhabiting this land, took sorrows and pains of the people as his own, planted dreams of his people in his own eyes and then made his poetry as the realisation of their long-cherished dreams.

For that purpose he adopted the technique of

symbolism and conveyed his message to the people through his characters which he chose from the folklore of Sindh. Shah Latif floats into local spheres more so with the aim of avoiding alienation in his thoughts, as he intended to communicate to his people his philosophy of life, in a familiar tone, so as to make it more effective.

Shah Latif addressed his poetry directly to the people, he therefore studied the people's mind and their traditions thereby amalgamating it with his profound knowledge of lyricism, so that the readers start singing in ecstasy while his poetry becomes the beat of their heart and the song of their soul.

He intended to make people understand as to what is the reality-visible and invisible. Shah Latif had cognizance of both. He had the impulse not only to analyse the prevalent historical and social phenomenon, but also knew the long historical perspective which often determines the changing courses of history and assimilate the collective consciousness of society into it.

The decline of the Moghul Empire, the invasion of Nadir Shah Durani, the aggressive intervention of western powers and the internal wars of local rulers had stormed the very age of Shah. He knew it pretty well that the blowing storm would sweep away every tradition of the civilization and history and would destroy it so completely that nothing would be ever known to mankind. He feared that the visible reality might shatter the fabric of the invisible reality as well. Therefore he lighted the spiritual world and brought wandering souls of darkness into the limelight of Sufism.

Shah Sahib was a Sufi poet. But he was not an exponent of the belief which makes man enunciate life. On the contrary, Shah Latif has taught to own and love life. He prefers, "pursuit" more than "renunciation". In his opinion pursuit is a dynamic, enlightening and meditative human action. The weariness, obsession and pain in pursuit is never less pleasant and vigorous than the pleasure one feels in the union.

The early sufis considered this world sinister. So, in

reaction, they decided to renounce life for the sake of spiritual power and attainment of good. But Ibn-Al-Arabi and such other great sufis refused to accept the notion. They defined the material - spiritual interaction in human life in such a manner of modern philosophy that the sufis of the later ages couldn't resist being impressed by it.

There is no clear evidence of the fact that Shah Latif was impressed by the philosophical renaissance of Muhiyuddin Ibn-Al-Arabi except through the Massanavi of Maulana Roomi. However, it is a fact that he believed in the infinity of life. He thought birth and death as mere intermediary phenomena wheres there was no visible beginning or end of life.

Sometimes Shah Latif considers life and death as two different signs of corporal existence similiar to consciousness and unconsciousness. He believes that the life or consciousness is terrified by the onslaught of the environment, therefore its endeavours may not succeed. But if the aim in life is absorbed into one's very own "self", the feeling of the hardships of the times and environment withers away. It enables one to endure the pangs of the hardship with pleasure while in pursuit of the Truth.

With an amalgamation of these two realities, a unity of action evolves which is deeply obsessed with love. It is a state of mind in love which can be regarded as the last frontier of the, "Junoon-e-Khurd", without any fear of refutation. In such a state of mind neither time hampers, nor is there any feeling of space. The length and breadth of the universe is squeezed into a distance of a single foot step, and in the words of Ghalib, "Dasht Imkaan", becomes, "Naqsh-a-paa", (plains of possibility squeezed into a single footprint).

The overpowering spiritual touch in Shah Latif's poetry is due to his deep involvement with Sufism. Maulana Roomi also looks through the same mirror as Shah Latif does. So, Shah Latif's reverence for Roomi is because their source of seeking the truth is the same. Both the poets are divers of the same sea and their poetry is in search of

the same real pearls. Their poetry has further been unique and profound as a result of the powerful diction they have provided to it.

The only difference is that while Maulana Roomi created a story to explain a point, Shah Latif made his people understand the point through popular folk stories of Sindh. He explored a unifying point within the folk stories and their characters, thereby narrating it with power of his metaphor in his poetry. Shah thus revealed the hidden secrets of life and death, knowledge and truth etc.

The sum total of Shah Latif's poetry is persistent pursuit. It is also evident in the selection of his characters. And mostly Shah Latif's characters are women!

The question arises as to why it is so that Shah Latif has chosen characters who are mostly female?

As I stated earlier, Shah Latif's sufism doesn't teach renunciation of life. He is the exponent of "persistent pursuit." And for "persistent pursuit", consistent action is required.

In fact the female characters in Sindhi folk-tales happen to be more active and deeply involved in their pursuit than the male characters. Secondly, " woman" is the symbol of deprivation and suppression in our society. And thirdly, this woman is the metaphor of life as she accepts it patiently with all its atrocities.

On the contrary, the male character of the stories is not that much active and hurt. May be reason for this lies behind the status, action and reaction of the man in our male-dominated society.

So, it is yet another question as to why the female character in every tragic story surpasses the male and becomes a revealing reality?

Since Shah Latif teaches the philosophy of negation therefore only female characters of the folk-tales could have been representatives of his perception. It was only possible through the psychological study of the female

characters that Shah Latif could have proved evidently that life is another shade of the meaning of pursuit, another name of struggle, emancipation from oppression, and love which is created when the ideal is absorbed into the soul.

He doesn't ignore the involvement of the soul in the pursuit for truth. He represents life in the form of real characters and makes values of life as a living force out of emotional intensity.

The agony of Marui is manifested in his poetry as a powerful spark of patriotism while the sorrows of Sassui emerge as a symbol of ceaseless pursuit. The pursuit of something lost is visible in the tears of Leela while celestial fidelity is reflected in the love of Noori.

Shah Sahib has not only portrayed subjectivity of those characters but has also dealt with there objective analysis. He never forgets about the earthly relationship between man and life. He also analyses the factors responsible for social ailments. He brings into limelight all aspects of human nature to glorify them. Life in his poetry is not an abstract reality but one which is lively, throbbing and corporal.

So, whereas his poetry depicts lush green farmlands and orchards, steep mountains, thick jungles, overflowing rivers, natural springs of sweet and cold water and innumerable glimpses of nature's enchanting beauty, one can also find images of the fisherfolk, divers, ascites sitting by the fireside, the selfless sufis and palatial people with their faces sparkling with glamour and beauty.

Shah Sahib is not a historian who only deciphers words and puts them on paper; he, as a great poet, has analysed the history between the lines because actual history is always written between the lines.

You can take up any verse of Shah Latif, you will find that it is an interpretation of a moment in the life of his character. It is beside the fact that the moment would symbolise the entire age in which the tragedy of each and every person would be clearly reflected. And if you look at

it, irrespective of that particular age, it could reflect people of all times. The eternity of such impression cannot be had without deep study of human nature as well as the authority on the art of expression.

The basic truth in grasping of that eternity of impression is also incorporated only in the genius of a great poet and philosopher. The eye of such a poet does not only focus on the external phenomenon alone but the hidden realities are also exposed pertaining to that eye. With such vast canvass and imagination, poets of the calibre of Shah Latif cannot be inhabitants of geographical boundaries. Such poets happen to be representatives of the entire humanity despite their specific countenance, costume, and diction.

The poetic thought of Shah Latif is free from the exigencies of time and space also because he has encompassed the span of centuries within an orbit of a single moment and has shown the face of all people of the world in a mirror through accommodating a few faces of his characters. Likewise he has narrated a few stories through which he has come out with the story of the world in its totality.

Maulana Ghulam Rasool Mahar has termed him "Mujadid" in the light of such mystifying power where as he is not so by virtue of "Shariat" and "Fiqh". However, in the realm of art and literature, Shah Latif quite deservingly can be recognised as a "Mujaddid".

When I ponder over the verse of Shah Latif, I realise that there is no thoroughfare leading to the Almighty. Only narrow lanes of life lead to that destination. And each of his characters is, as if, saying:

"O fire, I am dumping my bones broken into pieces as fuel into your furnace so that you should not be extinguished".

All his characters are seen dancing on the tip of the dagger carrying the crucifix on their shoulders. Any action or word which comes in the way of their destiny is

considered by them as sin. When God blesses them, they are torn apart by the arrow and are thrown from the top of the mountains to be plunged down into the abyss, shattered into pieces thereby achieving the honour of eternity after going through on experience of trial and defeat. It is the climax of their trial which they endure beyond their capacity of endurance.

Beholding the characters of Shah Latif, the reader thinks that the, "Neel Pankh" (Robin), which is the soul of man, is so difficult to trace.

Obviously all his characters are commonplace, but he has symbolised them into eternity. Helen would never have been more than merely an abducted girl (whose abduction had caused two villages to be at daggers drawn with each other) had the pen of Homer not adopted her and made her a symbol of penetrating beauty. Each character of Bhitai is the symbol of sacrifice in persistent pursuit; as if addressing the moon saying:

" O, moon! how can I find you? "

The moon replying:

"Plunge yourself down from the top of the mountain. I shall meet you at the spring below."

Each character seems blood-stained, exhausted and endeavouring to enter its own paradise by trying to break its closed door with the axe. And there is no trace of despair during their consistent effort in their pursuit for truth. It looks as if each of his characters, while undergoing extreme torture, is saying, "until there are flowers, children and birds on this earth, there is no cause for despair".

Such optimism is found in abundance in Bhitai's poetry. And he has a great skill of putting such a thought in his words which are echoing from eternity. It looks as if each of his word has a soul passing through an evolutionary development of the centuries.

Shah Latif has evidently proved that no word spoken by the people happens to be wraped in ambiguity. It

is extremely difficult to revive a dead word to life, but without it how can poetry claim of prophethood.

Shah Latif has awarded feathers of Jibrael to each and every pastoral word. He has also blessed the language with a magical enchantment of music which is beyond reach of any great instrumentalist.

One can feel music in fragrance and colour. And a creative genius can have the art of converting music into colour and fragrance. It is not impossible that whisper of quietness can be felt from a desert flower and the Sindhi Vai makes one feel the fragrance of Thatta's fragrant flower.

In my opinion the words of Bhitai sometimes reflect murmuring of the soft waves and sometimes the thunder of high sentiment. It is as if his poetry says:

"Fill your breath into me as the lion does with his newly born cub".

As I have already explained that in common approach Shah Bhitai was not a philosopher, he was a Sufi, and the roots of Sufism are very much attached with the matrix of philosophy. It is beside the fact that his sufism has emerged from his soil. I think even today he might be peeping through the magic casement of paradise saying to one of his disciples:

"Alas! I could behold some green leaf fluttering in the desert of Sindh."

(Presidential address by late Shaikh Ayaz in "Philosophy Congress", Islamabad.)

Sirajul Haque Memon

BHITAI'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

"ساجن ۽ ساڻيھ، ڪنھن اڻاسيءَ وسري"

" Sajan Ain Sa aneh, kanhin ana'asi-a visre".

(The Beloved and the Homeland, only the shameless can forget.)

Such beautiful words only Bhitai can compose!

These words of Bhitai — "Sajan" (the Beloved) and "Saaneh" (the homeland) in juxtaposition contain the sum total of Sindh's political perception pertaining to the past, present and the future. These are the words which make Shah the *sine qua non* of Sindh. These words are quite simple, easily understandable, which the Sindhi people can easily comprehend. Visibly there are no deep philosophical intricacies in these words, nor is there any invocation of politics. There is no trace of Sindhi chauvinism, either. There is no marxism nor a hue and cry for the ideology of political philosophy of Sindh. It is the doctrine which has guided Sindhi masses since the time of Mohen-jo-Daro.

The eminence of a philosophy lies in the fact that it touches the hearts of men and vibrates in harmony with them. It transcends the exigencies of time and place. It represents unalterable truth which, with the passage of time, becomes more vibrant, completely irreplaceable and which becomes the source of spiritual sustenance.

This is how Bhitai expresses:

وڳر ۾ وائي، ڪالهہ تنهنجي ڪونجڙي،
سَرَ ۾ سارينئي گهڻو، پيئر ۽ پنائي،
پسين نہ ڦاهي، جا ماريءَ سندي من ۾؟

'Wagar-a mein waa-i, kaalh—a tunhinji Koonjri,

Sar-a mein saareena-i ghano bhenar-u ain bhaa-ee

Paseen na phaahi, jaa maariee-a sanday mann-a mein?

(There was a whisper about you in the flock, Yesterday, O, Crane!

Your brothers and sisters

While landing in the water pond, remembered:

Why couldn't you precieve the trap

The hunter had in mind for you?)

And he warns again:

بغل منجهه بندوق، ماريءَ ميرا ڪپڙا،

ماريو مير ملوڪ، لتاڙيو لڪ چڙهي!

"Baghal-a manjh Bandooq-a maaree-a mera kapraa,

Mariyo meer-a malook-a, lataario lak-a charhe."

(The hunter in disguise concealed a gun under his armpit,

He succeeded in killing the noble men

And crossed over the cliff safely.)

This is how Bhitai symbolises his political perception which has become the heritage of Sindh. Whether we have learnt anything from it is too obvious for us all to see. But the trinity of the message of Shah Lateef is as true today as it was yesterday. It has an equal relevance in the present as it was in the past.

The time seems to have come, once again, to speak of Sindh, the Sindhi people and the Sindhi language loud and clear. If we fail to do so, we would quite deservingly be labled as 'shameless' - the 'Anasa', by history.

Lets pray that we do not deserve the curse Bhitai has uttered in his verse, thus:

چڻـــل ڇڄ هـــٿـــن ۾، ڪُـــلـــهـــن ڪـــوڏارا،
پـورهـئـي خـــاطـــر پـانـــهـــنـجـــي اٿـــين ســـوارا،
اوڏ تـــه ويـــچـــــارا، لاکـــــا وڃـــن لـــڏيـــو.

'Chhinal-a chhaj-a hathan mein, kulhan kodaaraa,

Porihay khaatar panhinjay, uthiyan sawaaraa,

Oad-a t-a vechaara, Lakhaa! wanjan Ladiyo'.

(Broken winnowers in their hands,

And spades on their shoulders,

They rise at dusk for work to survive,

But yet the poor Oads, O, Lakha!

Have to leave their homeland)

But then Bhitai himself creates a symbol of hope to avoid the curse when he says:

ڳـــالـــهـــيـــون پـــيـــٽ ورن ۾ وڌي وڻ ٿـــيـــون.

" Gaalhiyoon pet-a varan mein vadhi vann thyoon".

(The things that are spoken,

Explode like a tree inside!)

For the Sindhis, this is his philosophy, the politics and the constitution which cannot be distorted or corrupted by any Eighth Amendment. Now let us ponder as to how has this verse of Bhitai become our political philosophy!.

Bhitai was born, brought up and grew up to be a young man at a time in history when Sindh was beset with great affliction. The Sindhis had just crossed the rivers of blood in getting rid of the tyranny of the Arghuns and Moghuls. The era of Kalhora dynasty had the status of semi-subjugated and semi-independent society. Inspite of the fact that Sindh was independent and had its own government, it was languishing under the yoke of the domination of Moghul federation. The centre was

predominated by the likes of Jamat-e-Islami and the IJI of Aurangzeb. Hudood ordinances, martial law regulations, lashes and other inhuman punishments were the order of the day. The poor rulers of Sindh - the Kalhora, endured all humiliations in silence and were compelled to enforce the laws of Aurangzeb.

The Moghul troops and traders had established a brutal monopoly and controlled all crafts, industries and artisans of Sindh. If anyone even as much as, groaned under the ruthless tyranny, special pronouncements were issued from Lahore and Delhi to teach him or her a befitting lesson. Not only this, but troops were time and again despatched to Sindh to get the royal commands implemented in letter and spirit. Thus tragedies similar to that of Tori Phatak occurred every now and then in Sindh at that time.

The henchmen of Moghul federation were appointed as Chief Secretaries and Advisors in the court of Mian Yar Mohammad Kalhoro and Mian Nur Mohammad Kalhoro. For the sake of appearances, they were obsequious before the local rulers of Sindh but only those laws were implemented in Sindh which the hanchmen of Moghul federation suggested to the ruler. The military cantonments similar to the one at Pano Aqil were established in the north and south of Sindh just to check Kalhora rulers from going astray in any wanton pursuit.

When Aurangzeb and his successors per chance faced tragedies similar to that of August 17, the sanctimonious priests felt alarmed. They, like the PNA leaders, sent SOS calls to Nadir Shah and later to Ahmed Shah Abdali, urging them to intervene in the name of Islam and to impose martial law as Islam would be in great danger in Hindustan as well as in Sindh.

Both the marauders accepted the SOS appeals of the clerks and imposed such a horrible martial law in the country that even the souls of Changez and Halaku were shaken in their graves. The unprecedented atrocities unleashed by Nadir Shah on Sindh were so colossal that the

common Sindhi folk shuddered at the sound of stampede of horsemen in a manner which may be compared to the fear generated by the Kalashnikov bursts of the modern days. Hundreds of thousands of people were slaughtered, everything which looked green was destroyed and all the libraries, schools and colleges were burnt to ashes.

Mian Nur Mohammad Kalhoro in his "Manshoorul Wasee-at", lamented the loss of his libraries more than the kidnapping of his three sons for which he offered fabulous ransom consisting of a convoy of camels loaded with Atlis and Keemkhuwab, (the Velvet) pearls and precious stones.

And he also wrote a verse in Persian to be despatched along with the ransom:

"Salami razanishb-e ijz-o-niaz,

K-e aye Shah Afghan gardoon faraaz,

Manam bandah taajdar to-o amm-u,

Badd-e farmanbari naamdar to-o amm-u."

"Let my salutations of humility be placed before you'

O, the King of Afghan who rules the skies,

I am merely a slave of the King,

And am obedient servant, O, King!."

But when Nadir Shah died, the same Mian Sahib traced the date of his death from "Safaak Na apaak", (the imure tyrant). Qazi Abdul Qadir, a poet narrated the date of his death, thus:

"Fitna-e Nadir chu baroon shud zamiyan,

Rahat aamad bahma aalimiya,

Khush khabar Vaatif farmood Za-ghib,

Mahva shud aafat Nadir za-jahan."

" When the calamity that was Nadir disappeared,

The entire world rejoiced,

The messager gave a good tiding thus.

"The calamity of Nadir has disappeared from the universe."

Tracing the date of Nadir Shah's death with jubilation was exactly the same when Sindhi poets interpreted "the August 17" through this verse of Bhitai:

متو آهين مڇ، ٿلهو ٿيو ٿونا هٽين،

تو جا پانئين اڇ، ٿنهن پاٽيءَ پنا ڏينهڙا.

"O Shark! you have grown so obese,

Butting against all that you met;

Remember, the expanse of water,

That you thought was yours,

Is at last dead and gone."

Such was the political environment Bhitai lived in. And such was the political atmosphere in which at the instigation of the Moghuls, like the present day, an FIR was lodged against Shah Inayat Sufi and he was martyred. Bhitai wrote such powerful elegy on his assassination that even today anyone reading the lines cannot hold back his tears.

It looks as if through the verse Bhitai offers condolences to all the Sindhis on the martyrdom of Shah Inayat:

ساريو سانپيئڙن کي، روح منهنجو روءِ،

پانڌي پنهوارن جو، ڪالهہ نہ آيو ڪوءِ،

راڄ پرتو رب کي، سومرا سندوءِ،

راتو ڏينهان روءِ، مٽي مارُوئڙن جي.

"Saariyo sanbhiyaran khe, rooh-u munhinjo ro-e,

Paandhi pa'anhwa'aran jo, ka'alh na aayo ko-e.

Raaj parto Rabb-a khe, Soomra Sando-e, Raato deenha'an ro-e, miti maroo-aran ji."

(My soul weeps when it remembers the soul-mates,

There is no news since yesterday, of my people,

O Soomra! God be with your folk,

For the mother earth of the people,

Weeps and cries night and day!

Such were the tragedies and calamities that shook the hearts of the masses, what to talk of Bhitai who possessed the most sensitive heart of a poet. What a great torment he would have suffered during those times could only be visualised in imagination. In fact he gave vent to his inner storm through his verse and vais thereby rewarding his own people with an eternal message to sustain a vision for the future.

He cried out so loudly:

جاڳو جاڙيجا، سما سک مَ سمهو.

"Jaago Jaareja, Samaa sukh-u m-a summaho".

(Wake up O, Jareja!

O Samma! please don't go to sleep in peace.")

Bhitai has been giving such a call persistently since the last two and half centuries. And his call is equally relevant today as it was yesterday. Poetry of this kind transcends time and space which has retained its relevance and vitality even today.

But the call for 'waking up' and 'not sleeping with peace' was relevant only if there was a philosophy to explain why it was necessary to wake up and for what. That

ideology is in fact incorporated in this line of Bhitai:

"The Beloved and Homeland only the shemless can forget."

The words are commonplace but an all pervading historical perspective and knowledge lie behind them.

Man has travelled a long way on the highway of civilization to attain present intellectual and social development. The evolutionary development of homo-sapiens has taken thousands of years in his post-cave life period to develop his love for the Homeland and the Language. The identity of man in the world today happens to be his Homeland and his Language. The 'pre-humanoid' or 'pre-homo-sapien' stage of evolution had not bestowed Man with the art of speech or love for the Homeland. Only when Man came out of the cavelife struggling against onslaughts of nature, the could be identified with the Clan, Tribe or Nationality. The Language also evolved during this phase of the evolutionary development of Man when desire to communicate with other homo - sapiens arose.

Man started living with other Men socially. Rousseau analysed it as theory of Social Contract. Thus based upon such a Social Contract, the Man started living on the land with others speaking the same language and developed love for the Homeland and the Language. Now Man was developed so much intellectually he started loving all those who loved his Homeland and Language and disliked those who did not.

The Sindhi language in its long history of evolution has given unique and creative meanings to the social interactions in its territory. It is yet another major subject for the linguists to study and analyse.

The word "Sajan" which means 'Beloved' literally means a sympathiser, a close relative, a companion, a friend, a comrade, a beloved. The meaning of the root of the word in Sindhi is a person born of the same mother, a person belonging to the same family, community and nation. When the literal meaning of the word was

influenced by the socio-cultural interactions, the word acquired the sense of "Countrymen".

"Saajan ain Saañeh, beyi akhar-a hekre".

(Beloved and Homeland are words synonymous!)

The word "Saaneh", (birthplace or homeland) also has a historical perspective. The meaning of the root of the word pertains to a social group, the members of which are tied together with a strong chain. Society and social phenomenon transformed this word into the meaning of the Homeland. The factor of the common language further cemented the social bond among the people who became one-nation having a place of land of their own, besides the language.

The third word Bhitai used in the trilogy of his verse is "Ana'asi". The common dictionary meaning of the word "Ana'aso" denotes to "one who is 'shameless, having no nose'. It is a heinous curse in Sindhi language.

But now the linguists have discovered that the meaning of the word, 'Anaaso' is, the one who cannot speak - the speechless - dumb - who has no tongue, no language, such a person seldom attains that much cultural development which may bless him or her with the capability of having his tongue, his language. This meaning of the word is explicitly mentioned in Rigveda where praising Indra it is said that,' He sprayed arrows on his enemies who were "Ana'asa", having no tongue, no language".

Apply any of the meanings mentioned above, to the word, it is clear that Bhitai considers a person "Ana'aso" who has forgotten his language, his countrymen and his homeland. He is frivolous, shameless and an imbecile. But if the other shade of meaning is applied, it means a person having no tongue or Language.

Bhitai's trinity of philosophy of patriotism is a unique phenomenon in politics and poetry. Subsequently, to be more explicit, Bhitai comes out more clearly in pursuit of his philosophy when he says:

حسيف تنين کي هوء وطن جن وساريو.

"Haif tanee khe ho-e, Watan jin Visa'ariyo".

(Fie upon those who have forgotten their homeland.)

It is only one aspect of patriotism. Let the misguided consider it as Parochialism or Chauvinism, but it is an eternal fact that, love for the homeland, is university recognised as 'positive human behaviour'.

Bhitai was the first philosopher who underlined three factors viz People, Homeland, and Language as vital for culture while explaining his political thought. He believed that these three factors were inseparable and essential for the development of a society.

So in the light of Bhitai's political philosophy, one must love his homeland, the countrymen, and their languages. It is as if Bhitai teaches to love Sindh, the Sindhis and the Sindhi language. And it is not merely to show love for them, but to protect them, develop them and fight for them.

The way Bhitai himself has loved his Homeland, his Countrymen and their Language is unprecedented.

He has expressed his profound love for each and every thing of Sindh from "Karachi's Whirlpool to the Peacocks of Karoonjhar". He has emotional attachment with each and every inch of the soil, the sea, the river, the lakes, the trees, and each and every branch of the trees, and each and every particle of the sand of Thar. He is in love with every Maru of Thar, every herdsman, every peasant and every insect of Sindh. And if any of them is suffering or any Nadir Shah or Ahmed Shah Abdali trespasses an inch of the soil, he gives a call to the people to rise:

"Wake up O, Jaareja!

O Sammaa, please don't go to sleep with peace!"

Or in other words, he says:

"O Crane, how come you forget about your flock?"

Dr. Ghulam Ali Allana

WATER WORSHIP IN BHITAI'S SUR SAAMOONDI

References of historical evidence pertaining to the Water-worship in Sindh are available in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, especially in Sur Sa'amoondi of Shah Jo Risalo.

Sindh, in fact, is a multi-cultural and multi-religious land having centuries-old history. Anthropologically speaking there are numerous cultures and cults adopted by the people of different ethnic origin living here since centuries.

There is River culture, Indus Plains-culture, Delta-culture, Sea-culture, Coastal-culture, Lake-culture, Fisher-culture, Rice-culture, Desert-culture, Kohistani-culture, Manchhari-culture, Urban-culture and Rural-culture etc flourishing in this land of the lower Indus valley.

If analysed in the long historical perspective and in the light of numerous shades of cultures flourishing in this land one can conclude without any fear of contradiction that the people of this land right from the Stone Age have been worshiping various gods and deities including Stone, Fire, Water, Trees, Fish, Crocodile, Animals, Snake, Sun and the Moon etc. World-known scholar of the Asian studies Dr. Asko Parpola and Sindhi archaeologist Taj Sahrai have in their writings testified to the fact.

According to my own obeservation and exploration, the womenfolk of the tail-end of river Indus, especially those belonging to Jaati, Shah Bandar, Chhachh Jahan Khan, Badin and Tando Bago, worship the Sun at the time of naming the newly born child on the sixth day of his or her birth. They consider the sun as manifestation of life and its flourishment.

Even today, rural people in villages offer milk to the Cobra snake. The Sindhis love and respect the

Snake-charmers and offer them gratifications. The discovery of various motifs on archaeological finds including Swastika, Pipal leaf, Fish and Water waves further confirm about this ancient faith of the people of Sindh.

Sir John Marshal in his world-famous book," Mohenjodaro and Indus Civilization", considers Water-worship as Indus cult. He has also referred to the motifs on the pottery of ancient Indus civilization including those of Peacock, Swan, Snake, Sun, Sunflower and Pipal leaf etc. Professor Dr. Riaz Siddiqi has indicated to the worship of the Bull, and the Cow by the Indus people in ancient times.

The Water-worship is also an ancient phenomenon in Sindh. The indigenous people inhabiting both banks of Indus even today observe certain rituals which tantamount to Dariya Panth , Jal Pooja or so to say the Water-worship. The fisherfolk of Sindh beside many other tribes and social groups honour , love and respect water while Aghakhani or Ismaili sect of Sindh also give great significance to Water worship in their religious rituals.

Dr. Thakur of India concludes in his thesis for doctorate that the Sindhi Hindus of Sindh were the old worshippers of Water. He says that the Sindhis in the olden times had been celebrating Corn festivals at the time of harvest of two crops of the year in Sindh. He says that the Water festival is observed at the time when the first flow of the fresh sweet water of Indus comes to the barren land while the other festival is marked at the time when the river water recedes. He says that during two festivals of coming and going of the water flow, the riparians worship Water. They do so also at the time of birth and death of a person. The last rites of Hindus after their cremation are also observed in water.

My personal observation suggests that prior to the digging of the Kotri barrage, the people of the tail-end of Indus used to celebrate the incoming of water flow to their areas through jubilations which included drum-beating, dancing, singing and playing of music. Thus such

jubilations flowed southwards as flowed the water of Indus for irrigating vast patches of land for cultivation of the crops which usually bring prosperity to the people. The womenfolk also join such jubilations by offering grain, musk and other valuables to the water besides lighting lamps on water banks .

The people of Sindh love and respect " Dariya Pir ", as symbol of Water-worship. Professor Lal Singh Ajwani in his famous book, " History of Sindhi Literature ", writes that, " In Sindh ' Waran god ', is worshipped on large scale. The Waran god is Dariya Shah. In their faith, Dariya Pir is Udero Lal who was born in Nasarpur in the 950 A.D in the house of Ratan Rao and his wife Dayoki. The birth of this water god was solemnised on the occasion of Cheti Chand." Equal number of Hindus and Muslims observe the annual Melo of Udero Lal.

The Sindhi Muslims call it , " Khuwaja Khizr", or " Zindah Pir", while the Sindhi Hindus call it "Dariya Pir" or "Udero Lal." The last resting place of Udero Lal is five miles away on road from Tando Adam to Hyderabad. The Yatris of Udero Lal's festival, both Hindus and Muslims of Sindh chant slogans of, " Jhoolay Lal ". The people of the fishing communities usually come to pay homage to this water god.

Dr. Thakur writes that, " Dariya Pir is the creator of this universe and he lives in the Indus river. He blesses the whole world with life, the symbol of which is Lily flower. However, the Indus people believe that the Dariya Pir turns barren lands fertile through irrigation and also destroys human settlements through floods." Commonly it is believed that , " Dariya Pir takes fish as vehicle and floats on the water covered by the lilies ".

It is perhaps because the people of Sindh love and respect Lily flowers and fish. The fish is considered to be an elixir for longetivity. Fish is therefore served at Makli on annual Urs of Makhdoom Adam along with red rice bread. At the mazar of Mughal Bheen in Ja'ati cats are served with dishes of fish by all residents of the area. At the mausoleum of Ghulam Shah Kalhoro (Hyderabad) the offerings of

meals comprise specifically of fish.

When the fisherfolk of Manchhar lake, (located in Dadu district of Sindh) , launch any new boat in the lake, a glamourous jubilation is organised on the occasion. The same is the case with launching of new boats on Indus or any creek of the river in the Indus delta.

In 1989 I had written in quaterly " Mehran ", that the Water-worship has been an ancient tradition in Sindh especially at mazars of various saints. Inside the Darbar of Udero Lal there is a 'sacred water well '. The Hindu worshippers consider this water as sacred and apply it to the body besides drinking for remedy of their various physical ailments.

I have also seen that the Water worship in various forms is in practice at the mazar of Qalandar Shahbaz of Sehwan. At Lal Bagh and during long route of pilgrimage to Lahoot La Makan, the Sufis of Sindh make their sojourn at every spot of water in the mountains. They consider every natural spring of cold or hot water as sacred during their spiritual pursuit while walking to Lahoot on foot.

The thesis of Dr. Shahnawaz Sodhar for doctorate on Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai also contains many such details which confirm the historical fact that Water-worship had been one of the oldest traditions prevailing in Sindh.

In Sur Sa'amoondi of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai the references of Water-worship are available in five verses and one Vai (a form of Sindhi sonnet). Bhitai has depicted a number of scenes showing young wives of the traders gone on voyage busy in offering rice, musk and other valuables to the sea thereby praying an early return of their husbands from sea voyage. The young damsels are shown worshiping the Water and praying for their reunion with their departed husbands and beloveds.

Bhitai has said in this context :

ايـيــون تـڙ پـوڄـين وهـون وڻـجــارن جـــون.

آٽـيــو اكـــا ڏيــن، كـــٿـــوري ســمـــونـڊ كــي.

Ubhyoon tar-a poojeen-i,
Wahoon wanjaaran-i joon,
Aanyo akhaa deen-i,
khathooree samoond-a khe.
" The wives of merchants, waiting there,
Did bring their offerings to the sea;
Bright lights they kindled everywhere —
And even musk to waters gave."

جا جر جاتون نہ ڏئي، ڏيا نہ موهي،
سڏون ڪوهہ ڪري، سا پنهنجي ڪانڌ جون.

Jaa Jar-a Jatoon na de, diyaa na mohe,
Sadhoon koh kare, saa paahinje kaandh-a joon.
" She who to sea no offerings makes,
And doth not kindle floating lights —
Is not in earnest, hath no stakes,
Beloved she will never meet."

The mariners of Sindh in the olden times used to set their sails when the north winds blew and returned back home with blowing of winds from the south. This phenomenon has been portrayed by Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai in Sur Sa'amoondi, thus :

لڳي اتر اوهريا، واهندي ورن.

lagge utter-a ohryaa, wahunde waran.
" With blow of the northern winds
they set their sails for voyage;
And make their return back home
when winds blow from the south."

The sea-traders of Sindh used to initiate their voyage of the river and the sea from their settlements on the banks of river and the river creeks to Sri Lanka, China, Java, Somatra, Maldives and Persian Gulf etc through Pura'an, Mehran, Hakro and Sindhu rivers, touching river

ports such as Nehto, Rato Kot, Pari Nangar, Vango Patan, Bagh Patan, Bangha'ar, Joon, Fatah Bagh, A'agray (capital of Jasoodan), Maham Toor, Dhandhi, Mulakatiyar, Da'adwah, Miranpur, Rari, Mirpur Bathoro, Nangar Thatto, Sando Bandar etc and also from ports of Indus Delta such as Shah Bandar, Dhara Bandar, Orang Bandar, Dero, Lari Bandar, Jakhi Bandar, Keti Bandar, Hameet Bandar, Rahmoki Bazar and Sindhri Bandar etc. Today, many people who are descendents of those old Sindhi marine-traders are permanent inhabitants of some foreign countries such as Maldives, Sri Lanka, Malabar, Java, Somatra, Adan , Bahrain, Basra, Ormari and Las Bela.

This verse of Shah Latif indicates that in Sindh there were many ports located both on the sea shore as well as on the river and its creeks in Indus Delta.

کاري کيڙائو مٺي موتيا،
سودو ڪن نہ سون جو، وڏا وهائو،
موتي جي مهراڻ جا، تن جا طاماعو،
سامونڊي سائو، لنڪا لوپي آئيا.

Khaare kheraaoo-mathe mithe motiya'a,
Sodo kan-i na son-a jo, wada'a wihaoo,
Motee je Mehraan-a jaa tin ja taamaaoo,
Saamoondee Sa'aoo, Lankaa Loope aiyaa.
"The ploughers of the salty deep,
The waters sweet have entered now;
Their inmates bargained not for gold
But greater wealth they wished to reap.
The flourishing mariners, lo
Port of Cylon for pearls did sweep,
And safely in the boat they keep
The treasures they in Lanka found."

Bhitai has recorded, besides the trade history of Sindh with far off lands, the cultural history of Sindh in Sur

Sa'amoondi. He has portrayed the ports of Sindh where the wives of traders (gone abroad for too long) come to the bank of the waters and offer valuables to the water for an early return of their husbands and beloveds. This is water-worship which young and old women perform as a prayer for realisation of their hearts' desire.

جر ٿر ڏيا ڏي، وڻ ٽڻ ٻڌي وانٽيون،
الا! ڪانڌ اچي، آسائتي آهيان.

Jar-a thar-a diya'a de, wan-a tin-a badhe waanutyoon,
Alaa! kaandh-u ache, aasaaitee aahiyan.
" She kindled lights on land and sea
And pretty tufts to trees she tied
Oh God I have great hope in Thee
My loved - one, back to me let come."

And for the woman who doesn't kindle floating lamps, doesn't worship the waters, doesn't offer grain and fragrance to the waters and doesn't pray for the return of her husband and the loved-one, Bhitai says :

جا جر جاتون نہ ڏي، ڏيا نہ موهي،
سڌون ڪوهہ ڪري، سا پنهنجي ڪانڌ جون.

Jaa jar-a jaatoon na de, diya na mohe,
Sadhoon koh-i kare, saa pahinje kaandh-a,
" She who to sea no offerings makes,
And doth not kindle lights ___
Is not in earnest, hath no stakes,
Beloved she will never meet."

The scene of Water—worship is depicted by Shah Latif in this verse in which the women lovers are standing on the water bank and are offering fragrance and grains to the sea or river for. an early return of their beloved husbands:

ايئيون تڙ پوڄين، وهون وڻجارن جون،

آٽيو اکا ڏين ڪتوري سمونڊ کي.

" The wives of merchants, waiting there,

Did bring their offerings to the sea;

Bright lights they kindled everywhere __

And even musk to waters gave."

Now the departed merchants have come back and they are together once again after a long voyage. Their wives are feeling excited and are saying :

جنين ڪارڻ مون ٿي تڙ پوڄارا پوڄيا،

پنيم اميدون سيئي سڄڻ آئيا.

Janeen karan moon the tar-a poojaaraa poojyaa,

Puniyam umedoon, se-ee saajan-a aaiya.

" For those, for whom I sacrificed'

Did worship waters, kindle lights __

My hopes all have been realised,

My loved - ones have returned to me !"

So, the tradition of Water-Worship in Sindh, as depicted and testified by Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, is an integral part of Sindh's culture which still continues on the banks of Indus and the sea shore of Sindh. Besides being a religious cult, it is a unique manifestation of Sindhi culture too.

Besides, there are many other aspects of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai's Sur Sa'amoondi which include the knowledge of oceanography, the history of Sindh trade, changing seasons of Sindh, the specific vegetation growing in various seasons, the information about the geography of Sindh, its foreign trade, the life of Sindhi merchants , the winds blowing on the Sindh waters and the emotions of love arising out of the hearts inflicted by the sorrow of their separation from their loved - ones.

The scholar will have to plunge into the abyss of the deep waters of knowledge which Shah Jo Risalo (his poetic collection) contains for highlighting all other aspects of this important Sur of Shah Latif's poetry.

Dr. Tanveer Abbasi

POETIC IMAGES IN SHAH LATIF'S "RISALO"

In painting the colours are used as medium while in music the tunes play the vital role. But in poetry the images are created and formulated by the words. So we can say that words play the role of colours and tunes in poetry.

We gain knowledge of the external world through our sense organs, which are means of communication between our innerself and the external world.

In the West the imagist movement started in the early years of this century. The leaders of the movement were Ezra Pound, Richard Arlington, Hilda Dolittle, F.S.Flint and others. If we apply some of the criteria of the imagist movement to the poetry of Shah Latif, we find out that his images are real as life.

The poetry of Shah Latif has risen more from nature than books. The poet was a very keen observer. Nearly every landscape of Sindh is visible in his poetry - be it a desert, forest, sea , river or boats and ships, caravans, flocks of cranes, full moon-lit nights, early dawn, rainfall etc. The images of Shah Latif are so vivid that they remind Ezra Pound's line :

رات سهائي پونءِ سنئين پٽين وڏو پند،
هلندي حبيب ڏي، ڪوها موڙ مَ ڪند.

" The images would begin to speak."

The full moon-lit night, vast and flat land all around and a camel - rider . . . . Here is an image with touch of freshness as if it has been drawn just now.

پورئين پاند ٽمن، جڳهہ جهاڳي آيئون،
ڪاڇو مينهڙين، منداڱفتو ئي ماٺيو.

The water is trickling from bodies of white buffalows,

They have just now come back home from the pastures after bathing in the water pool.

Archibald MacLiech writes : " Poems are not meant to be beautiful necessarily, they are meant to be poems. Thus the images in the poems are not meant to be beautiful necessarily. They are meant to be images of the poems."

The following image is not beautiful but a real one:

ڪاريون ڪوجهيون ڪُوَڙيون مور نہ موچاريون،
وٺي ويٺيون واٽ تي ککيءَ جون ڪاريون.

The fisherwomen, dark - complexioned, ugly featured and dirty in all respects sit by the roadside with foul-smelling baskets full of fish.

Shah Latif's images sometimes concentrate on the features of persons. They are like portraits, photographs in which the entire stress lies on the very person while the background is ignored :

سنهي لڪ، نڪ سنئين، ڪجل ڀنن نيڻ.

Narrow waist, long nose and eyes stained with Kajal!

This great poet not only draws word pictures, but he draws them with all their colours. Thus many of the images are the Colour Images :

جهڙا پانَ پن تهڙيون سالون مٿن سايون.

They have shawls as green as bettle leaves wrapped over them....

ڏاڙهي رت رتياس ڏند تہ ڏاڙهونءَ گل جئن،
چوڏهينءَ ماهہ چنڊ جئن، پڙ ۾ پاڳڙياس.

His beard is stained with blood, his bleeding teeth look like pomengranate flowers and his turban shines like full moon in the midst of the battlefield.

These images are still, but some images contain a sense of movement. They are moving images. They convey the feeling of something really happening. I.A.Richards has defined the moving images, but Shah Latif's images are paramount.

There is a landscape showing water of the Keenjhar lake below, and green bushes hanging above with branches of the trees fluttering and the boat of King Jam Tamachi sailing inbetween. The northern winds blow and the boat starts rocking like a cradle. This blowing of the north wind and rocking of the boat give the sense of movement to the poetic image.

هيٺ جر مٿي مچھ، پاسي ۾ وڻراه،
اچي وچ ۾ تماچيءَ جي ساءِ،
لڳي اتر واءِ، ڪينجھر هندورو ٿئي.

Tactile and thermal sense organs are also important. We can have tactile and thermal images corresponding to them. Here are some thermal images :

اتر ڏني اوت، نہ مون سوڙ نہ گبرو،
چارئي چنيءَ پوت مون ريڙھيندي رات ويئي.

" The cold northern winds are pouring in while I do not have any rug or blanket, thus I pass the whole night pulling corners of the undersized bedsheet, which is unable to cover me ! . . .

This image is not only a thermal image but the effect of the cold on the poor lady is also visible.

Now we come to the sense of smell which gives rise to the olfactory images. Shah Latif has the art of creating magic of fragrance in his images merely through his words:

موڪي مٿ اپٽيا، سوِيرا صبوح،

اڇي جي عبداللطيف چئي، باس اِنہ پهتي بوءِ،
ڪڙو جي ڪڪوهہ، تہ بہ وٽ سر گهرن ويٽون.

Mokhi (the bartender girl) opens lid of the earthenware pots full of wine early in the morning. The smell of the rich, mature wine spreads in the atmosphere , and the drunkards reach the tavern by following the smell. Though the wine is bitter, they ask for the cup filled to its brim.

This was the fragrance of the wine. The human body, especially that of the beloved has a particular, typical scent - a lovable smell :

سرهي منجهان سات، آئي بوءِ پنيور ڪي،
بنيئا بزارن ۾، لاهي جت جبات،
سندي هوت جمات ڪيچ پهتو قافلو.

" This fragrance of the bodies of Punhoon and his companions spread in the whole town of Bhambore when they remove their gowns.

جنهن تڙ ڏوڙون، چوتا چندن چڪ ڪيو،
اچن پوُنر پنيوليا، پاڻيءَ تنهن پون،
راول رتو رون، ڪو وه لڳو واسنئين.

The beautiful women who have applied sandal wood scent to their hair are bathing in the water pond. As they wash their scented hair in the water, the sweet smell of sandal gets mixed with water and the large black bees get confused and fall unconscious in that scented water mistaking it for some flowery bed.

As already quoted, the images are not meant necessarily to be beautiful . They are images and images only. The art of poetry is to describe each and every type of scene correctly and vividly. Shah Latif has created many images which convey the picture exactly and vividly, may it be beautiful or not :

ڪکيءَ هاٽيون ڪاريون چيچيءَ هاٽا چيچ،

پاند تنين جي پاند سين لڳو ٿئي لڄ.

" They have baskets with fish-smell and dirty clothes on, so dirty and filthy that one would feel ashamed to even touch them." Thus a complete picture of ugliness and filth is depicted here.

The following image is visual, as well as auditory. Such are the compound images. To quote one more:

وڻن وينا ڪانگ، وچين ٿي ويلا ڪري،
گهڙي گهڙو هٿ ڪري، سڻي سانجهيءَ ٻانگ،
سي ٿي ڊوندي سانگ، جتي ساهڙ سپرين.

" Crows are returning to their nests in the trees, while the Moazzin is calling for evening prayers. She (Sohni) is preparing to plunge herself into the river along with a pitcher.". . This image is visual, but the evening call by the Moazzin conveys auditory factor also.

Images are not the end of poetry. They are only a means towards achieving a greater end, and that is to convey an experience to the reader.

Burgson says that many different images taken from different places focus the mind on one single thing. The experience of reality is the sole purpose of poetry, for which poets use image as a means.

نہ سي وڙنڻ وڻن ۾ نہ سي ڪاتياريون،
پسيو بازاريون هينڱڙو مون لوڻ ٿئي.

This is a rare type of coupled image.

There are no cotton plants, the fields are barren, and spinning girls are also not there. When one looks to the bazar, one gets depressed....

Two different images - the barren fields and gloomy vacant bazars. Both of them point towards economic crisis which attacks Sindh when cotton crops are destroyed.

Here is another interesting coupled image :. . . .

اسان اڌارا آٽي آونگ چاڙهيا،
منهن ڏيندي مون آئيا سمها سيارا،
اپرن سيڪارا پسيو ور پين جا.

" The woman without a husband has borrowed fish to cook her food. She is lonely and apprehensive of the coming winter season. She sighs when comes across the husbands of her friends.. . . .

Borrowing food, cold nights of winter season, all alone in bed and sighing over the sight of others' husbands - all the three images are different, but all of them point to one reality loneliness. A wife without a husband has to borrow, sleep alone in the cold winter nights and sigh at the sight of other women's husbands.

These were some of the many images created by Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai. The poet is very sensitive to feelings and uses exact language to describe them. His images are more vivid, real and fresh than many imagist poets. He has the art of recreating any experience, be it beautiful or ugly, fragrant or foul - smelling; or be it prosperity or poverty, pain or pleasure.

Shah Latif has created visual images which are moving and coloured. There is a variety of thermal, tactile, olfactory, auditory, compound and coupled images.

Ezra Pound writes, " It is better to present one image in a lifetime than to produce voluminous works of art."

Shah Latif has presented so many of such images.

Mumtaz Mirza

SUR SAMOONDI OF SHAH LATIF

Besides mystic notes, spiritualism and divine secrets, the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai is based basically on the love-stories of Sindhi folklore such as Sassui-Punhoon, Umar-Marui, Leela - Chanesar, Moomal - Rano, Sohni-Mehar and Noori-Jam Tamachi etc.

The secret of Shah Latif's poetic popularity happens to be these love-stories which are well known to the masses of Sindh besides being the focus of common peoples' interest during informal public gatherings in Sindh villages.

These love stories have been referred to, time and again, by the poets of Sindh before and after Shah Latif's times as well as during the lifetime of Shah Latif. But the art of expression, his most powerful diction and selection of words is unprecedented. It is the basic characteristic which makes Shah Latif an unsurpassed poet of Sindhi language.

The supreme poetic skill with which Shah Latif has dealt with the love- stories of the lore was possible only because he had had the personal experience of studying people and places, monuments and matters related to these legendary tales. Otherwise all those classical stories of Sindh were already known to him and he could very easily have sung them even by sitting at the Bhit or Hala for that purpose.

But in that case the fascination of the diction could not have been achieved as such. It would have been merely a heresay and the account would have manifested an artificiality of expression sans the real spirit as its motivating factor.

The pain and pathos visible in Shah Latif's poetry is more so due to these tragic love - stories of the Sindhi folklore.

However, Sur Samoondi (the mariners) is one

such episode of Shah Latif's poetry which has no love-story or any tragic event in its background. Then how was it possible that Shah Latif could infuse such a great content of pathos in it ?

In my opinion it was the socio-economic and political pain of Sindh , an overall economic and social destruction which was portrayed by the poet as perennial pathos of the people inhabiting the lower Indus valley.

Before dealing with the subject with quotations from the Risalo, let us refer to the subjective and objective socio-economic and political conditions of Sindh in the times of Shah Latif just to understand the whole phenomenon.

Main events of Shah Latif's age :

1689 A.D. - Birth of Shah Latif.

1699 A.D. - Captain Hamilton's visit to Sindh and his account of the Sindh situation.

1701 A.D. - Mian Yar Mohammad Kalhoro sought mandate from Aurangzeb arbitrarily to rule over Sindh. The Daoodpota rulers of upper Sindh were defeated.

1711 A.D. - Mian Yar Mohammad Kalhoro enhanced his power network in upper Sindh.

1719 A.D. - Mian Yar Mohammad Kalhoro died and the title of,'Khuda - Yar' was conferred upon his son Mian Noor Mohammad Kalhoro .

1736 A.D. - Mian Noor Mohammad Kalhoro became Subedar of Sindh.

1739 A.D. - Nadir Shah ransacked Sindh which became subject of Iranian empire.

1750 A.D. - Sindh was annexed to the Afghan kingdom of Ahmed Shah Durani.

1752 A.D. - Demise of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai.

At the time of the birth of Shah Latif, Sindh was under subjugation of Dellhi's Moghul empire. The Delhi

kingdom used to appoint a Subedar for managing affairs of Sindh. Such a practice continued for about one and a half century from 1592 to 1739 A.D. In the times of Shah Latif, Sindh was divided into two parts with two Subedars ruling over it. As a result, the general masses of Sindh lost their economic stability while the heavy agricultural taxes just crippled the growers resulting in retrogress for Sindh.

Meanwhile the geographical conditions were also deteriorated to such an extent that the inland transport system of Indus was destroyed; and with it the booming trade touched the lowest ebb. Thus the atmosphere of an ever-increasing trade and commerce vanished by and by.

Prior to the birth of our poet a western traveller Nicholas Withington visited Sindh during 1613 - 14 A.D. and was so much impressed by the trade and commerce of Sindh that he observed in his travelogue, " No city of India surpasses Thatta in trade and commerce". The managers of the East India Company had also spoken high of Thatta. They had reported that there were about 3000 families of the weavers at Thatta who manufactured "Khes" which was sold in Turkey and Iran dearly. The local traders exported this commodity to Congo (the sea port of Iran) besides the port of Basra.

Manrique, yet another Portuguese traveller, who undertook voyage of Indus from Lahore to Thatta in 1641. A.D. and stayed there for about a month,observes that Thatta was a great industrial centre and an important sea port where chain of ships used to be anchored for transporting economic goods to Portugal and other regions of Asia.

The decline of this industrial centre and important sea port began in the seventeenth century during 1650 - 1675 A.D. A decade after the birth of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, a European traveller Alexander Hamilton came to Sindh. He observed in his memoirs on Sindh that three years prior to his arrival at Thatta. a disastrous plague had hit this region so severely that in the city of Thatta alone about 80,000 artisans of silk and cotton perished in the

disease within no time. The plague, thus caused death blow to the Sindh's economy.

And again due to the process of siltation by the river Indus, the Thatta port lost its working capability and thus the trade of Sindh went down slowly and gradually. The bed of river was raised due to high silt, as a result, the water level maintained by the river was quite low. So, in 1692 A.D. Alexander Hamilton became dejected to see the city of Thatta. He was beholding the shattered minarets and perished monuments of the city which was once an emporium of trade in Asia.

It was due to the whimsical nature of the Indus river that the glory of Thatta was tarnished during the very early days of Shah Latif. The city as s whole met the decay and the sight of Thatta's destruction was painful. There was nothing else seen but debris at the places where robust buildings stood to witness the pomp of Thatta. The population of Thatta was drastically reduced to mere two thousand souls. And thus the status of Thatta as prime city of Sindh was no more.

The second biggest port after Thatta was Lahiri Bandar, which according to Nicholas Winthington, was at three days' journey from Thatta. In the 14th century A.D., Ibn-e-Batuta had visited Lahiri Bandar where according to him people from Yemen and Faras (Arabia and Iran) etc. used to come frequently for trading purposes. The tax revenue of this port in those days was sixty hundred thousand rupees.

Strategically, Lahiri Bandar was an important point to enter into India in the seventeenth century. It was a busy port contributing to the foreign trade of India and the maritime industry of Sindh. This port lured the Dutch, Portuguese and English to come to Sindh. Its coast was deep and convenient so much so that the ships carrying two to three hundred tons of cargo used to anchor at the Lahiri Bandar quite comfortably.

Antinio Bokaro, the author of Daily Report on Sindh in Portugese rule, writes in 1631 A.D. , that Lahiri

Bandar was a major port with impressive population. The English traders and travellers considered the architecture of this place insignificant, yet they have revealed that a large human population inhabited this part of Sindh whereas the commodities of daily use were supplied in abundance.

The author of, "Khalasatul Tawareekh" was an officer in the administration of Emperor Aurangzeb. Writing in his book on the Lahiri Bandar, he admits that it was a major port well known for the trade of pearls and other jewels. The port was so spacious that 4000 ships and barges could be anchored there at a time.

But alas ! the siltation by Indus destroyed this port city too by the end of the seventeenth century A.D. Due to the process of sedimentation in the bed of the river, its bottom level was raised leaving an inadequate flow of water to meet the sea. Thus the navigation in Indus was diminished on large scale and with it the trade activity died down bringing an end to the very existence of the port city.

So, this was the socio-economic condition of Sindh which prevailed prior to the birth of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai and continued till his youth. The situation was further deteriorated with the passage of time. And when Shah Latif undertook his journey in and around Sindh, he himself witnessed the ravages of poverty and destruction inflicted upon the port cities of Sindh. He observed that the smiths were beating the pewter at the places where lapidaries ever worked. . . . The poet seems to have been pained to see the destruction of his homeland !

Besides geography and history, the politics of Sindh was also responsible on a great extent to bring about decline of Sindh. In this context, the period ranging from 1701 to 1739 A.D., is remarkable. Prior to and after the proclamation by Mian Yar Mohammad Kalhoro to become ruler of Sindh, this land had witnessed quite a few wars. Even after becoming an independent ruler of Sindh more so due to the political decline of the enfeebled Moghuls, Mian Yar Mohammad Kalhoro remained engaged in internal strife or external battles by and large.

Mian Noor Mohammad Kalhoro who succeeded Mian Yar Mohammad Kahoro also passed almost whole of his life in fighting wars. He fought against Daoodpotas and went into offensive against the Brohis of Kalat. This way, the period till 1737 A.D., was marked by the wars. During this era of war economy, the poor could not bear the burden of rulers' extravaganza and secondly the rulers being deeply involved in the war, could not look after the civil administration in a befitting manner. Such a situation created social anarchy in Sindh.

What was left behind in Sindh was ransacked, plundered and destroyed by Nadir Shah's invasion of Sindh. He cracked on Sindh as a calamity. The barbarism unleashed by Nadir Shah on Sindh was like a black storm destroying everything coming in the way. He crossed the limits of humanity and civilization. No person or house could ever escape the ruthlessness of Nadir Shah. Both the poor and rich became the victims of his tyranny equally.

The wealth of Sindh had already been consumed by the war economy while the remaining treasures were looted by Nadir Shah as ' war price'. So he marched on and on in Sindh leaving behind nothing else but decay and destruction.

In the light of the above situation, one can understand that Sindh had become paralysed politically and economically. On the one hand the wealth of Sindh had been usurped by the foreign invaders, while on the other the geographical conditions worsened due to the siltation by Indus resulting in destruction of Sindh's agriculture. The common man was starving, the trading cities were destroyed, the humanity dishonored and the intelligentsia fled out of the country to settle down somewhere else. Poverty was the order of the day. There was no law and order and no trace of social security whatsoever.

In such a state of affairs it was but natural that Shah Latif, who was the messenger of truth, the poet of nature and an acute observer, could not have escaped the onslaught of the times. Being a great patriot and a sensitive

poet, Shah Latif accepted the influence of the prevailing situation and sung the songs of adversity.

In Sur Samoondi and Sur Sri Ra'ag, Shah Latif, by the power of his poetic symbolism depicted the situation of Sindh realistically and objectively. There are many verses in the Risalo pinpointing to such a tragic situation prevailing in the first half of the eighteenth century Sindh.

ننگر ۽ ناڙيون، پڳهه کڻي پنڌ ٿيا،

بند بازاريون، سڃا سامونڊي ري.

Nangar-a aeen naryoon, pagah-a khanee pandh thiya,

Bandar-a baazaaryoon, sunjaa samoondyun re.

" Anchor and chains lifted, they are

already far upon the way

Desolate are port and bazar

for mariners have sailed away."

The desolate port and bazar indicate to an overall economic destruction of Sindh.

نڪا بوءِ بازار ۾ نڪا ڇلر ڇٽ،

جتي ڏنيرين جي اڳي هتي اکٽ،

سي پڙ ڏسيو پٽ، ماڻهو وڃن موٽيا.

Nakaa boo-i baazaar mein, nakaa chhilir-a chhat-a,

Jite dambhryun jee age huee akhut,

Se pir-a disyo pat-a, manhoo wanjan motya.

" The bazar is without fish-smell,

while market formerly

With small carps, and with herrings too

abundantly did swell.

Now there is not a shrimp to sell;

buyers have empty hands." (Sur Ghatoo)

The desolate port , the empty bazars and people inflicted by the economic adversity are depicted in this verse of Shah Latif :

جتي گهوريو گهاتئين، تتي واريءَ ٻٽ،
سهسين ساٽي مُٽ، سر سڪو سونگي گيا.

Jite ghooryo ghaatuen, tite waree-a buth-a,

Sahsen saatee muth-a, sar-u suko soongee gya.

"Where fishers used to seek the fish,

the barren sand dunes lie;

Fish-sellers ruined, the river dry'

the tax collectors gone !" (Sur Ghatoo)

Shah Latif succeeded in infusing great pathos into the diction of his Sur Samoondi more so because of his portrayal of the social life of Sindh with its paining wounds and perennial sorrows. Otherwise this Sur of Shah Latif never has any tragic love story behind it such as Sassi-Punhoon, Moomal - Rano, Noori Jam Tamachi and Sorath - Rai Diya'ach etc.

Shaikh Aziz

SINDHI MUSIC AND SHAH LATIF

The study of Latifiyat has unlimited fascination. Like any other lover of Shah's poetry I have found Latif so great that every time I go through his life and composition, he offers a new dimension of study. However, as a student of music and musical history, I find Shah an institution, who provided the people of Sindh an opportunity to preserve their heritage for the future generations.

The popularity of Shah Abdul Latif as a great poet, has been so overwhelming that this contribution towards music has become lesser known. Ironically, scholars studying various aspects of his life too have fallen victim to the apathy that generally prevails in the study of Sindhi music and musical arts.

There is no denying the fact that Shah Latif was a great reformer of Sindhi music, but mere appraisal of this, leads to no conclusion as to what contribution he made, what kind of music existed at that time, what musical system he had inherited and what forced him to introduce reform. To the dismay of a serious student of music, very little, is available about the general format of Sindhi music at the time of Shah Latif.

In fact, the situation has become complicated due to the fact that studies on the life of the great poet have been confined to fewer aspects and the most unexplored area is that of music. This kind of a tendency derives its existence from the general indifference of the scholars towards Sindhi music and other related arts. The result is that despite the fact that Sindhi culture has been known to the world since times immemorial, there remain a number of flaws and missing links in historical records. And music is the main loser.

The discovery of the figurine of a dancing girl and the seal bearing a drum-beating artist of a Mirdang-like instrument inscribed over a seal from Mohen-jo-Daro and a pictogram of a dancing couple on the archaeological relics of Bhambhor, bear testimony that music was an essential part of the lives of early people of Sindh. Ironically, today when we seek guidance from history, no trace is found beyond a couple of centuries, or even a few decades.

The main cause of this paradox can be attributed to the political and historical changes Sindh has undergone during the past few thousand years. Frequent invasions from across the border, mass migrations and interaction with various cultures have pushed Sindhi music against divergent influences, leaving behind no reliable record of what happened to the original Sindhi music.

In 1950s, when a few enlightened Sindhi urbanites began tracking down the roots of their music, they faced many unanswered questions. Although this passion for pursuit led to the writing of some scholarly pieces, the absence of some reliable historical evidence and scientific methodology posed an impossible situation to track the line of history.

In that situation what could be done? This has become a tentalising question and scholars from all quarters continue to try to resolve the enigma in their own way. But as long as an unscientific approach continues, there is little hope of a break through unless we adopt a methodology similar to that evolved by scholars who tried to trace down their ancient musical heritage in other parts of the world. This is the discipline of historical musicology closely linked with anthromusicology and ethnomusicology — relatively new scientific approaches whose application, although varying according to geographical, social and historical background, offer some dependable basis of research.

First such pursuit was made by Arthur Prichard Moor, a musical scholar of mid-50s who evolved certain

fundamentals for in-depth investigation. His scope of studies was spread over many areas and although he intended to evolve a Rosetta—like format that could guide a researcher faced with a similar situation, he laid some sound guidelines that could help in taking up such a research. His assumptions suggest that traces of the older music could be found in the oral traditions of a particular society and the communities it had come across during the course of political and social changes and those ethnic groups that have in any manner preserved some fragments of their heritage. For instance, in studying the music of the east, he divided the area in four major groups: the far east including China and Japan; Indo-China that includes Burma and Polynesia; Indian continent including Iran and the Arab world; and the Mediterranean including Mideast and North Africa.

The music systems of these groups have distinctive characteristics in their texture and tonal behaviour. However their cultural and social structure have let them preserve their musical heritage to some extent.

This kind of approach can help us study our system of music or at least can pave the way for some kind of breakthrough. While study in the first three groups renders little help in determining our own musical past, the study of musical evolution in the Indian subcontinent can help us explore our musical heritage, especially in ascertaining tonal structure of the early age and subsequent evolutionary stages by way of deep study which may not be out of context in studying our own musical background.

Unfortunately, in tracking down the ancient music of Sindh we are also confronted with some historical contradictions. For instance, Sindh's contact with Mideast and Mediterranean is dated back to 3,000 years BC. This was the time when the rich civilisation of Babylon, Jericho and Egypt flourished and the Indus culture had spawned its wings to north India and Afghanistan too. This similarity found in the archaeological remains of Mediterranean, has given birth to many conflicting theories about the migration

of Sumers including the one which says that they migrated towards Indus valley four thousand years ago. The others are opposed to it. However, this is now established that contact with them was a mere trade relation.

The Mediterraneans had rich cultural heritage. Public congregations and festivals were part of their life. Every festival was marked by songs of the season. They had songs of almost every occasion showing that they had developed distinctive categories i.e. ritual music and work songs. These songs had one distinction which marked the beginning of what today is called the accompanied monody or a song accompanied by an instrument. These also included a variety of songs that were sung in the accompaniment of flutes, oboes, lutes and Jaw's harps. They still retain the tradition of epic singing r similar to the "gahan wariyaoon galihoon" of mediaeval Sindh.

Mediterraneans had music culture of which many similarities can be drawn with Sindhi music. Pre-Islamic Arab music had a number of work songs. The most popular was the Huda or the song of the camel riders. They also had developed elegies sung on instruments called Bakka. The present Arab music has deep roots into these early forms. Absence of any notation system in Arab music has rendered it without any detailed trace, and today scholars depend upon oral traditions.

In texture early Arab music was essentially monodic which expanded in linear scale. The song ascended in half-tones and the singer did not leap in full notes but progressed elegantly.

An important area, and perhaps more reliable in he study of Sindhi music, is the history of the evolution of musical arts of the subcontinent. Mass Aryan migration into Indus valley in 1700 BC, preceded by many other races. In this context two divergent views are presented: while some scholars say that Aryans cast deep influence upon the social structure of the local people and culture, the others suggest hat proto-Dravidian culture remained intact and it were the

Aryans who were influenced by the Sindhi culture. Evidence suggests that Aryans were nomads and always sought new pastures to graze their cattle and their entry into Indus valley was merely an incident. They had no developed system of music and whatever nomadic songs they had, were lost in the local music during the process of cultural assimilation.

In the later period, Vedic literature provides some kind of source on early Sindhi music. Written in 900 BC, Reg Ved denotes a style of virtual singing called Saam. Musicologis Arnold Beck notes that this ritual song involved three priests. Beginning with slow singing, every singer would sing a part of the song called Paresto, Ogeeta and Patri har, followed by choral singing with a finale called Nidhan. Relevant evidence shows that the music of Sindh at that ime had a tetrachordal scale which later developed into chromatic form, which means an octave spreading over five full notes with accidental raising of half tones; and perhaps application of microtones, that might have begun to evolve by then.

Vedic period marks the beginning of the writing era. By 800 BC, its influence had extended up to India, Kathiawar, Sindh, Qandhar and Gujrat and was in close touch with Mediterranean, Mideast and north Africa. This was a period of intricate cultural interaction Sindh had undergone including the musical arts. This was followed by the rise of Iranian influence, testimony of which stands in the form of Presipolis which is said to be built by Sindhi artisans and logistics in 500 BC. Sassanids maintained close relationship wi h Sindh and despite the evidence that King Beharam Baur II is reported to have employed a number of Sindhi artisans and musicians in 5th century, it does not provide substan ial information about the texture, format, content and the tonal frequency of the then Sindhi music, or the influences that were exchanged between the two races.

The Arab take-over in 712 A.D., brought a radical change in the administrative structure of Sindh. By then, Sindh had developed its musical arts to a great extent, but

the reports of Arab geographers and court historians for many reasons mentioned nothing about it. This is also obvious that music and musical arts received no official patronage by its new rulers.

Since then Sindh had been subjected to constant wrath of external aggressions and internal turmoils till the take-over by Soomras in the 11th century A.D. The period of three and a half centuries was relatively calm and peaceful marked with significant growth of musical arts including the institution of troubadour and dance drama. But once again the reliable sources have been lost in ravages of political developments and today what remains is the oral institution which has become the only refuge of a great heritage.

Astounded by such a situation, today's scholar is faced with a multitude of problems, whose resolution can lead to a possible solution of the enigma. The situation is aggravated by certain preconcieved notions that have shrouded scholarly pursuits in Sindhi music. Before a scientific study is commenced, the researcher will have to classify the music culture, identify the areas of study and apply scientific methods that have so far proved effective in determining this rich heritage in other ancient races. We will have to shed many inherited notions about the origin of our music and accept those which are approved by the historical developments.

Briefly speaking, the culture of music started with oral tradition. Beginning with the concept of a magical effect and developing to utilitarian stage, the primitive music developed with the social, economic and historical changes. The division of music into two major sections i.e. secular and utilitarian music, became evident at quite an early stage of the human civilisation. Today, the work songs including the peasant music, forms the best source material on music culture of the human race throughout the world. Historical developments may differ, but this heritage has remained more or less similar in characteristics, creating a wide base for study in our own musical diction

and application.

From evolutionary point of view, vocal music is classified in three main kinds: first the recitative, spread over one or two notes with full emotional expression of the singer; the other is syllabic which comprises a phonetic stanza capable of expressing a part of the song but not less than two notes, and the third is the melismatic which is a piece of song spread over many notes.

The first two kinds i.e. recitative and syllabic are related to the workman, peasant and other labour who originated them during his work, and even today are sung by all workers of the world. Fortunately Sindh has retained abundant number of such work songs. Such was the force of the recitative and syllabic songs that even during the ceremonial songs in which choral singing was followed, these two kinds were mostly sung. Since these songs were related with the evolution of human activity, they also developed in form and content. In traditional societies like Sindh where community bonds are rigid, these formats could still be traced down.

Today, we speak about the developed form of Western music, perhaps for the reason that it has preserved itself and traced back its roots. But in fact, the origin and evolution of the two is common. Their remote ancestor is the same i.e. the oral tradition. In some cases, like the institution of the troubadour or the English traveling jongleuors, Sindh has been quite ahead than the West. The institution known in Sindhi as Charan or Bhand Faqir is recorded in Sindh's history as back as 9th century before Christ, while the earliest western troubadour was found in France in the 12th century, when this institution was a part of common music culture and formed the main source of music and history in Sindh.

But what makes the Western approach more appreciable was the search of a system that could relieve the musician of the burden of memorising music, transcribe it on a paper, sing and play even when he is not present or

has passed away. In fact, this was an attempt to preserve the music for generations to follow. Paradoxically, the initiative came from the church in the fourth century. Later, joined by other priests and musicians, it took 14 centuries to accomplish the objective of evolving a system that has ensured a permanent system of preserving music in its true sense. Although the objective of writing music was necessitated to preserve the Biblical hymns and choirs, it helped preserve the whole system of Western music.

Let us, then, come to the music of the Indus. We have before us two broad objectives without deviation: to trace the early history and contents of Sindhi music and the influences it had been inflicted upon; and secondly, preservation of the present music which might get lost with the invasion of modern influences. In fact, the preservation of the present musical heritage is more important as it can form the basis of our ethonomusicological studies to trace the roots.

As far as preservation of the musical heritage is concerned, Sindh has a complex society bound in rigid family and tribal traditions since times immemorial, retaining a rich treasure of music and musical arts through the members of the community. But, it has never been able to evolve a system of writing music, similar to Indian musicians who, although, have maintained an uninterrupted enrichment of secular and ritual music, have failed to evolve such a system. Why this cannot be evolved is due to the musical palaeography, tonal value and the frequency of notes that exist at different altitudes in Western and our musical system. Nonetheless, here are two important factors on our side: one, that Sindh still has a large source of living singers who remember, sing and transmit to another generation the musical heritage that had been owned for generations. Their recordings can form the basis of what the researchers want. Second and more important, is the study of ethnic and community music that has lived with these particular communities since generations. This is more important as it is these rhymes, lyrics and melismatic compositions that hide the traces of early Sindhi music.

Equally dependable source is the music of the races of those Sindhi origin that migrated to other parts of the world and still retain peculiar Sindhi origin. Here history should help the musicologist.

This music retains in itself a history of human development, emotions and variations that have come through the ages of political and historical changes and social effects. No other source could be more reliable than these songs to get to the roots of Sindhi music.

By doing so, we must not forget that Sindh is not a single geographical, cultural and historical entity. Every cultural division is sub-divided into many sub-cultures that cannot be merely over looked in such ethnomusicological studies. This can lead us to determine, not only the contribution the great poet Shah Latif made towards music but can also give us a chance of tracing down our roots of the rich musical heritage of which Shah Latif was an honest trust.

At the time of Shah Latif, Sindh was a crucible of internal feuds and alien aggression, disrupting the very social and economic fabric of the country. He was himself affected by the political developments. People longed for peace and tranquility, which forced the great humanitarian to abandon his abode and wander about Sindh and adjoining places. In fact, this gave him the change of better understanding of his people and their miseries but also to know the people and the culture they owned. He knew the music of his part of Sindh but by his visits to various other parts of the country, he came across a number of musical forms he was perhaps unaware of, or he found some kind of similarity. And when he settled during his last part of life, he re-studied it, brought some new compositions and set his poetic compositions to them—a tradition which has become an essential part of Sindhi literature and music.

No doubt Shah's contribution towards music is great and unsurpassed but unless the heritage he inherited and reformed is not unearthed, it will be difficult to adjudge the

reforms he made in the tonality, texture, rhythms and behaviour of the notes he made in Sindhi music. This, in greater expectation, will also provide an opportunity to re-evaluate our musical heritage and perhaps rewrite the history of our cultural glory.

K. M. Larik

SASUI : AN EXISTENTIAL HEROINE OF SHAH LATIF

When a writer of past centuries expressed an opinion about his craft, he was not immediately asked to apply it to the other arts. But today it is customary to 'talk painting' in the argot of the musician or the literary man and to 'talk literature' in the argot of the painter, philospher, psychologist or existentialist. Perhaps the arts are more closely interconnected and intertwined today than ever before. It is because of this that I have attempted an existentialist approach to Latif. I really do not know how far Latif would have appreciated the company to which he is consigned by me. Before I proceed further with my arduous task, I would like to state briefly what this thought-confounding term Existentialism, means.

The philosophy of existentialism can best be understood as a reaction against the Age of Reason. Reason was looked at as man's highest faculty, capable of solving all human problems and of providing him with a complete and all-embracing knowledge. In other words reason was considered as absolute. The word 'absolute' means two things, firstly that it is an altimate part of reality, underived from and undetermined by any thing else. Secondly, that the powers of reason are unlimted. Well, such a belief in reason obviously becomes irrational as human expreience shows that reason is a part of human nature and that it is influenced by human nature and its powers are limited. It is this violent, unreasonable, fundamentally irrational claim of reason which, in its turn produces the violent and now openly irrational raction in the form of existentialism. The refusal to belong to any school of thought, the repudiation of this adequacy of any body of beliefs whatever, and especially of systems, and a marked dissatisfaction with tradiitional philosophy as superficial, academic, and remote from life—that is the heart of existentialsim.

The great discovery in modern psychology of the subconscious and the unconscious states of mind has made us realize that human actions are determined not only by intentions and impulses of which we are aware but often by urges, instincts, impressions, childhood expreience, of which we remian unaware. The relaity of the unconscious state of mind shows beyond doubt, that reason has limitations. This psychological limitation of reason is definitive (2) because the Age of Reason was based on the identification of man with his conscious self alone; if the unconscious has the real power which it has, reason cannot be absolute.

In the absence of any conclusive knowledge available to man, there is a predicament with regard to the decisions which he has perforce to make. This plagues man's situtiono. Though the theories advanced by diffrent existentialist writers diverge widely in many important respects, so that it would be misleading to speak of a philosophy, school or movement, certain underlying themes can be singled out as characteristic. Existentialists tend, for example, to emphasize the unique and particular in human experience; they place the individual person at the centre of their picture of the world; and are suspicious of philosophical and psychological doctrines that obscure this essential individuality of man. The existentialists also believe that each man is what he chooses to be or make himself; he cannot escape responsibility by claiming that his character or deeds are determined consequences of factors beyond his power to control or resist, nor can he justify what he does in terms of external or objective standards imposed upon him from without. Their beliefs range from atheism to faith in God, from dread before death as total finality to an anticipation of life eternal. There are atheists like Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Marcel, Mattin Buber, and theists like Nietzsche, Camus, Sartre and Merlean Ponty.

My effort would be to show affinity of Latif with the theists or religious existentialists. The mournful impression of the world of Bhambhore which Latif gives,

when Punhu has left, is typically existentialist. For Sasui, the world of Bhambhore is fragmented, indifferent, meaningless and out of joint. She exhibits nauses, anguish, despair, loneliness, guilt, boredom and complete alienation from Bhambhore. She encounters nothingness of her existence. She sounds like a stranger in this world. In this state of irreconciliation with the world of Bhambhore where her life is nothing but absurd, she takes an existentialist decision. She abandons Bhambhore:

I shall leave Bhambhore, naught endears. this Bhambhore to my heart(3).

چڏينڊس ڀنڀور هنيون هت نہ وندري. (4)

This is no small a decision that she makes. She prepares herself to leave her hearth and home. her friends and relatives, infact everthing, Bhambhore is the smoke of hell(5) to her:

Bhambhore is the smoke of hell.

پيئر هن ڀنڀور ۾ دوزخ جو دونهون. (6)

It is indeed a town of filth and ugliness, a place of fear and distress, but what is apparently in store for her when she leaves this town and tries to scale mountains in search of Punhu?—a tragic predicament indeed. Latif dramatizes this tragic spectacle like a great artist. The world to which Sasui is now exposed also poses problems to her. There are threatening mountains. She faces hunger, thirst, exhaustion, fear, deprivation and despair. She is in a situation where no one ever got anything. The mountains like high-headed tyrants saw her body no woodcutter mercilessly cuts the helpless tree. Hideous shadow ghosts with their winding ways dim Panhu's track. The mountains remain dumb and unsympathetic to her as they provide no clue of Punhu's wherebouts. The sharp stones tear into shreds her soles and bruise her feet, they are callous and cruel to her. She has to walk the chequred roads paved with hot glowing stones. Thousand thorns prick her soft feet and cause her endless woe, her feet are torn so that one toe does

not meet the other. The sun makes it all the more hard for her by setting so early and she apprehends that she will lose track of Punhu. Knowing all this, she makes a decision to leave Bhambhore. Well, to put it in the terminology of the theist existentialists she secures freedom by leaving Bhambhore, by jumping, into the arms of Punhu. She makes a movement of faith by her headlong plunge into whatever is apparently absurd. Sohni (7) also made a literal jump into dark waters. Prophet Abrahim, by telecological suspension of the ethical for the sake of a higher and sublime purpose, made such a plunge by becoming ready to sacrifice his son. He had a firm belief that all would be well in the end and so it was. He stood the test steadfastly. A man of faith, in the words of Kierkegaard, is like some one who puts this money on an outsider; he acts from faith in the "absurd"(8). Sickness, anguish and loneliness is the temporary lot of a person choosing this leap in the dark, Socrates abandoned natural sciences and stuck to the quality of faith in life. Sasui has such an unfailing faith. She is a Fairy of Faith burning with the desire to find solid ground and an ultimate sure ground and foundation whereon to build a tower reaching Punhu, allegorically implying the infinite. The world of Punhu is revealed to her in some personal and incommunicable premonition rather than by an objective inquiry. Her decision adds therapeutic value to her existence—liberating her from the beguilements and debasements to which she would have been subjected at Bhambhore and gives direction of authenticity to her existence—a relationship with Punhu which is well-grounded. She chooses through a leap of faith in 'partial ignorance'(9). It is relevant to quote what Latif says in Leela and Chanesar:(10)

O God, let me not wise be,

Loved-one all favours did to me,

Wise ones sorrows see—

When I was simpletion(11)

الا ڏاهي مَ ٿيان ڏاهيون ڏک ڏسن،

مون سين مون پرين پورائيءَ ۾ پال ڪيا.

Although Latif dramatizes despair and shows Sasui separated from Punhu by the gulf of the absurd, he never despairs. Temporary despair of Sasui is not the final thematic statement of this particular Sur (musical theme). Latif dramatizes search for salvation of Sasui more than despair. Sasui creates meaning out of despair, and finally the notes of despair are all overcome. It can be safely inferred that like most of the theistic existentialists, Latif rejects the conception that human life and human endeavour is beset by absurdity. He asserts that the 'absurd' does not represent an incluctable human condition. Latif successfully leaps over the abyss and lands safely on the other side although the abyss poses an impending threat to Sasui. Discouragement does not mean death to Sasui and even death means regeneration of new hopes as Kierkegaard says: "Our being is an 'existence towards death', an illness which must lead to death'.(13) Death of course is final proof that life is meaningless as far as absolute existentialists are concerned but it is not so with the religious existentialists. It is death that is dead not Sasui. The paradox of Sasui gives substance to her hope, despite all the apparent meaninglessness created around her. The absurd is conquered by its own paradoxical nature. Both dread and the absurd lead Sasui to a strange harmony with Punhu which transcends all reason. She never separates her thoughts of Punhu from her intense yearning towards him:

Immaculate Sasui; her eyes,

are ever on Punhu bent(14)

ڏري ۾ ڏاري، ست سورن جي سسئي،

پيئائي پنهونءَ ڏي، نرمل نهاري.

Sasui has conquered herself. There is no trace of nihilism in her. It is within her that Punhu abides. Through a Socratic search, it has been revealed to her that:

'Punhu' I had become..... imersed,

In woe, but 'sasui' was. (16)

پيـهـي جـان پـاڻ ۾، ڪـيـم روح رهـاڻ،

نـه ڪـو ڏونـگـر ڏيـهـه ۾، نـه ڪـا ڪـيـچـين ڪـاڻ،

پـنـهـون ٿـيـس پـاڻ، سـسـئي تـان سـور هـئـا.

I have tried to interpret Latif as religious existentialist. It is not a big deal. Shaw has catergorized writers into three types.(18) Firstly, those who hold mirror upto Nature, secondly, those who 'merely' hold mirror upto Nature like a policeman on a point duty. They do not bother what people pass by. Thirdly, there are writers who escape life because they are not able to face it squarely and fairly. There is yet a rare category of writers, says Shaw. And they are the type that evade all kind of labelling. They devour everything that comes in the way—romanticism, realism, mysticism, existentialism and call it what you may. Latif belongs to this rare category of writers, ladies and gentlemen, thank you.

End notes

1. Sasui — A female character, a beautiful daughter of a washerman, who returns passionate love in the same measure to Punhu, the ruling prince of Kech. The whole story is sung by Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit in five Surs (musical themes) in his Risalo. Punhu marries her and settles down with the washermen. Punhu's brothers take him away on camel back while Sasui was asleep. On waking. when she finds that Punhu has gone, she is in despair and leaves Bhambhore, her home, for Ketch in search for Punhu. Just near ketch, her delicate health gives way and she dies in the mountains.

2. Roubiezek, Paul, Existentialism; For and Against, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1966, P-4.

3. Elsa Kazi trans., Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif, Hyderabad, Sindhi Adabi Board, 1965, Sasui Hussini, 1:6, P—134.

4. Shahwani, Ghulam Muhammad, ed., Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit, Hyderabad, Madina Printing Press, 1950 3:1, P-597.

5. Elsa Kazi trans., Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif, Hyderabad, Sindhi Adabi Board, 1965, Sasui Husaini, 1:6, P—134.

6. Shahwani, Ghulam Muhammad, ed., Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit, Hyderabad, Madina Printing Press, 1950 3:4, P-597.

7. Sohni is a female character who falls in love with Mehar which literally means buffaloehred. The latter lives on the other side of the river. During a dark wintry night and rain, when the river is in high flood, Sohni seeks to swim with the help of a jar of cleco clay (baked jars of clay, open at the top, are often used by fishermen to float). Some jealous person has replaced her jar with an unbaked one which breaks in mid waters and the maiden is drowned.

8. Encyclopacdia Britannica, vol. 8, London

Encyclopaedia Britannica, inc., 1967, P-694.

9. Encyclopacdia Britannica, vol. 8, London Encyclopaedia Britannica, inc., 1967, P-694.

10. A Sur in which Latif tells that Leela was the first lady in Chanesar's domain who loved diamonds above every thing. Tempted by diamonds, she lost her spouse. The daughter of a minister falls in love with Chanesar and disguises herself as a maid and in league with her mother comes to terms with Leela who accepts diamonds in exchange of her husband for a night. In the morning when Chanesar knows about Leela's consepiracy, he turns her out of his house. Chanesar likes those that are knwledgeable but humble and hates those that are haughty and proud of their possesion or knowledge.

11. Elsa Kazi trans., Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif, Hyderabad,, Sindhi Adabi Board, 1965, Leela Chancesar, -xx: II, p-142.

12. Shahwani, Ghulam Muhammad, ed., Risalo of Shah Abdul-Latif of Bhit, Hyderabad, Madina Printing Press, 1950, Leela Chancesar, 4-6, p-586.

13. Roubickzek, Paul, Existentialism: For and Against, Cambridge University Press, 1966, p-58.

14. Elsa Kazi trans., Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif, Sindhi Adabi Board, Hyderabad, 1965, Sasui Abri, xv, 1:2, p-116.

15. Shahwani Ghulam Muhammad ed., Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit, Hyderabad Madina Printing Press, 1950, Sasui Abri, 1:2, P-381.

16. Elsa Kazi trans., Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif, Sindhi Adabi Board, Hyderabad, 1965, Sasui Abri, v.2, p-121.

17. Shahwani Ghulam Muhammad ed., Risalo of Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit, Hyderabad Madina Printing Press, 1950, Sasui Abri, 5-2, P-409.

18. West, E. J. ed., Shaw on Theatre, New York, Macgibbon and Kee, 1958, P-62.

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S. M. Jhangiani

A POET OF THE PEOPLE

A poet is born and not made, so goes a Latin saying "*Poeta nascitur, non fit* ". To claim laurels, a poet must have an intellectual message to deliver, should be capable of producing pleasure by expressing it and, finally, he must possess power of a musician. The poetry of Shah 'Abdul Latif satisfies the touchstone of these rudiments. His imageries are the embodiments of his intellectual messages, his language and style are so effective that a repeated reading of his poetry does, in no way, lessen the pleasure and when sung, makes the listeners spell-bound. They are so enthralled by it that they think they do not belong to this but to a spiritual world. They feel as though they are captives here like birds in the cage and have been detained in this mortal world because of their own indulgence. Therefore, they flutter their wings to free themselves form the bondage and fly away to the land of their origin. In other words Shah has a powerful poetic appeal to the emotion and intellect of the readers and listeners of his poetry.

Tests of His Poetry

The modern critics have, however, prescribed three tests of a good poetry: Firstly, the harmony of words should be capable of creating music which they consider as *sine qua non* of poetry. Secondly, it should be immune from any change. No word or line thereof could be so adjusted as to improve the expression or enhance its beauty. Any attempt at change might, on the contrary, mar its beauty or sense of the word or line so tampered with. Shah's poetry passes through these two tests as smoothly as an hair is pulled out of butter. The last test lies in the medium of the poet's expression. Whereas Milton is said to have used about 8000 words in his poetry, and Shakespeare some 16000 words of English language, the Sindhi poet Shah has

surpassed them both in this respect. He is credited with 20,000 words of his language which had earlier held the status of a dialect but became 'pliant and capacious in the hands of Latif'. Shah, therefore, deserves to be classed as number one among the world poets. But this is not the 'end all' of good poetry. The choice of subject and the manner of treatment are no less important.

A great Nationalist

Nationalism is a natural instinct in man. He has an attachment to the place of his birth; the earth on which he was born and bred up; the water, the air, and the people—all that aided in his development from a mere baby to a full-grown man. Particularly, every poet in every language has sung the praise of his country—a heaven on earth, but Shah was nationalist to the core. He enriched the Sindhi language which was, so to say yet a dialect in his days. Persian was the court language and, therefore received all encouragement both at the hands of the rulers and the men of letters. Shah infused life in his mother tongue by his Risalo—a monumental work. He depicted the life of his people and their environs in a language which is both simple the sweet. Sur Marui, in particular, bears testimony to his intensive love for the motherland. There in he has drawn the pen-portraits of the land, its people, their poverty, hard work and honesty, the hills and dales, fragrant dust and the cool sand which could even revive the dead if sprinkled over the body. He has infused life into even inanimate objects, opened up his heart before them, shared his grief and complained against their cruelties. This is how he praises his country:

واجهائي وطن کي ساري ساهه ڏيان،
هي سر سائيهه سامهون منهنجو نج ميان،
مقاميائي مارئين وٽي ٿر ٿيان.
ميائي جيان جي وٽي مڙهه مليرڏي!

Vaajhaa-e vatana-a khe, saare, diyaan sah-u,

Hee sir-u sanreh-a saamhoon, muhinjo nij-i, miyaan!

Muqạamiyaani Maaruen, vanjee Thar-a ṭhiyan!

Muyaaee jiyaan, je vanje marh-u Malir-a de.

"If looking to my native land,

With longing I expire,

My body carry home, that I,

May rest in desert-sand,

though dead, I'll live again".

He regards the dust of his country as musk:

سنڌي جا ساڻيهہ کهہ ڪٿوري ڀانيان.

Sandi jaa saareh-a, khih-a khathuree bhaainyaan.

(I consider the dust of my country as musk.)

He wishes to die in his country and with that his body buried under its cool sand:

ٿڌي وسائجان ٿر جي مٽي مُئيءَ مٿاءِ،

جي پويون ٿئي پساهہ، تہ نجان مڙهہ ملير ڏي.

Thadhee vasaaijaan Thar-a ji, mitee muee-a mathaah-u,

Je poyoon thiye pasah-u, ta nijaan marh-u Malir-a de.

"The cool earth of the desert let,

the dead one's cover be,

When last breath comes, O carry me,

to Malir, I implore".

As the land, so are the people. Says Shah:

نڪا جهل نہ پل نڪو رائر ڏيهہ ۾،
آڻيو وجهن اهرين، روڙيو رتا گل،
مارو پاڻ امُل مليرون مرڪٽو.

Nakaa jhal-a'na pal-a, nako raur-u deh-a mein,
Aạniyo vijhan aahuren, roriyo rataa gul-a,
Maaru paan-a amul-a, Maliron markino.

"There is no force to make them pine,
no taxes in their land,
They gather lovely flowers red,
for managers of their kine,
Malir with lustrous smiles doth shine,
there priceless Marus are".

The people get a small quantity of food and yet they are contented and unique in honesty. The poverty has no reflection on them:

ٿوري قوت قرار يا رهن سبر ست.

thore qoot-a qarraariyaa, rahan-i sabar-a sat-i,
(Contented with little food, they are highly honest)

He prefers a hut of his country than a palace outside:

پکن جي پريت ماڙين سين نہ مٽيان.

Pakhan jee preet-i, maariun seen na matiyaan.
(I cannot exchange my love for huts to that of a palace.)

It was better to die of thirst with one's men rather than to drink syrup without them:

ور اباڻن سين اڃ، ڪوءِ شربت تنهنجو سومرا.

Varu abaanan-i seen uny-a, kho-i sharbat-u tuhinjo, Soomraa!

(I prefer to remain thirsty with my people

Than to drink your syrup, O Sumra!)

Marui's village Malir was located in Thar district where the rain visited once in a blue moon. It is otherwise a must for humans and cattle alike. The poet who had the welfare of the people uppermost in his heart, always prayed:

سارنگ سار لهيج، الله لڳ اڃين جي،
پاڻي پوڄ پٽن ۾ ارزان ان ڪريج،
وطن وسائج، تہ سڱهارن سک ٿئي.

Saarang-a! sar-a lahej-i, Allah lag-i unyan-i j-i,

Panee pooji patan mein, arzaan an-u karej,

Watana-u vas-aej, ta Sanghaaran sukh-u thiye.

(O rain! for God's sake, take care of the thirsty,

Send plenty of water and make the grain cheaper.

Flourish my country so that people my be happy.)

And when it rains, people feel relieved of the difficult days:

لاهيين مٿان لوڪ ڏولائي جا ڏينهڙا.

Lahiyen mathaan lok-a, dola-e jaa dinhara-a.

(You do remove the difficult days hanging over the people's heads.)

Shah was a rare instance of a poet, who held not only the welfare and prosperity of his countrymen dear to his heart, but also prayed for the well-being and prosperity of the entire world. It will not be an exaggeration to call him an internationalist in that sense. He prays to the Almighty:

سائين سدائين ڪرين مٿي سنڌ سڪار،

دوسَ مٿا دلدار عالم سڀ آباد ڪرين.

Saaneem! sadaaeen kareen, mathe Sindh sukar-a,

Dosa mithaa dildaar-a! alam-a sabh-i abad-i kareen.

"O God, may ever you on Sindh,

bestow abundance rare;

Beloved! all the world let share

thy grace, and fruitful be".

A Socialist of His Times

The sort of internationalistic spirit or love for humanity as a whole has been interpreted as socialistic bent of mind. G.M. Sayyid, a Sindhi politician of repute, feels that Shah Abdul Latif had the tendency which in modern phraseology could be termed as 'Socialistic', as Shah championed the cause of the poor. He considers King Tamachi to be the 'real leader of the masses' who married a commoner and that too from the lowest caste—fishermen's, sat in their midst, freely mixed with them, shared his treasure with them, helped them in their work and exempted them from payment of all state taxes.

Obviously, Shah believed in the philosophy of Vishwa Kutambam (world as a family). The salvation of mankind lies in Unity which is also the message of Shah. Even the birds and animals observe unity as they flock together or move in herds:

وڳر ڪيو وطن پرت نہ ڇنن پاڻ ۾،

پسو پکيئڙن، ماڻهئا ميٺ گهڻو.

Wagar-u kayo vatan-i, prit-i na chinan-i paan-a mein,

Paso pakhiaran-i, manrhuaa meth-u ghano.

"They in convoys travel ever,

their connections never cut,

Not like men their kinship sever,

Oh, behold the loving birds".

Asks Latif:

وڳر وساري ويٺين، ڪيئن ماٺ ڪري،

ڪو تو نه ماري رڻ جهڻ سندي سڄڻين.

Wagar-u vis-aare vethee-an kee-an math-i kare?

K-i to na mare, run-u jhun-u sand-i sajane?"

(Forgetting your flock, how are you sitting silent?

Does not the sweet talk of your friends kill you?)

Shah also championed the cause of the poor and the down trodden. He was up in arms against tyrant rulers like 'Umar who had kidnapped the daughter (Marui) of his subjects for the satisfaction of his own lust. If the custodians of law, property and honour themselves indulged in looting, where will the poor people go? Asks Shah:

جُه سي لوڙائو ٿيا، جني ڀر رهن،

مارو منجهه ٿرن، رهي رهندا ڪيترو.

J-u se loraaoo thiya, jinee bhar-i rahan-i,

Maaroo manjhai Tharan-i, rahi rahadhaa ketro?

(If those on whom they relied, became their looters,

How long could Marus live in Thar?)

And to whom could they go and complain?Says Shah:

جُه سي لوڙائو ٿيا جني سندي ڏير،

ماروئڙا فقير ڪنهن در ڏيندا دانهڙي.

J-u se loraaoo thiyaa, jin-i sandiee-a dhiree-a,

Marooara-a faqir-a, kanh-i dar-i dinda-a danharee?

(If those on whom they depended,

Turned out to be their looters;

Where will they go to complain,

These poor (Maroos?)

Such ruler invite the curse of the people who pray for their destruction and down fall as does Marui:

منهنجي آهـ اها ڪڏهن ڪيرائيندي ڪوٽ کي.

muhinjee aah-a ihaa, kadahin keraa-eendi kot-a khe!

(This curse of mine will, someday, bring down the fort.)

While the poor men and women of Thar had not enough to eat and wear, as also no place to live in, the princesses and high class women lived in palaces, covered their bodies with colourful silken clothes, bathed in scented water and played with silver and gold. What a strange paradox! The Thari people ate various kinds of grass and wild fruit (enumerated in Sur Marui), lived in huts or even in open space and covered their bodies with the leaves or the wool. Says Shah (Marui):

ويڙهيا گهمن ولين جهانگي منجهہ جهنگن،

مون کي ماروئڙن سڃ ڳنائي سيج ۾.

Werhiyaa ghuman-i valien, Jhaangee manjh-i jhangan-i,

Moon khe Marooaran-i, sunj-a ganaa-ee sej-a mein!

(Covered with the leaves (creepers).

The Maroos roam about in jungles;

They have given me,

nothingness in my dowry.)

The poet has also given the other side of the picture i.e. the way high class delicate demsels lived:

جهڙا پاڻن پن تهڙيون سالون مٿن سايون،

عطر ۽ عنبير سين تازا ڪيائون تن،

مڙهئا گهٽو مشڪ سين چوٽا ساڻ چندن،

سونهن رپي سون ڪين سندا ڪامڻ ڪن.

Jahiraa panaṇ-i pan-a, tahiriyoon saluṇ mathini saiyoon,

'Atur-a ain 'ambeer-a sein, taza kayaaoon tan-a,

Marhiya ghano mushk-a sein, chotaa saan-u çandan-a,

So.onh-an rupe son-a sein, sanda kamin-a kan-a.

"Like fresh pan-leaves are shawls they wear,

of shimmering emerald silk—

Their bodies all refreshed with attar

and ambergris rare;

From fullsome plaits sandal and musk,

perfume all round the air;

And delicate ears, dainty ware,

of glistering gold do hold.

What a contrast! But as seen above Shah has wholehearted sympathy with the poor. That is why he has immortalized the women characters (heroines), of Marui—a goat-herd girl, Suhini—a potter's daughter, Sasui—a washer-woman and Noori—a fisher-woman.

Enemy of Blackmarketeers

The patriotic fervour, belief in equality, combined with love for the poor, led Shah to condemn anti-social

elements, particularly the black-marketeers in food grains. History shows that blackmarketing prevailed during Shah's times, nearly three hundred years ago also and Shah had condemned it in unequivocal terms. The dealers in food grains purchased the grain from the farmers at the harvest time at low prices, stocked it, and afterwards sold it at high rates. Richard F. Butron tells us that even a century after the death of Shah, the grain was stored before inundation in conical heaps covered with a thick coating of Kahgil (mud) for purpose of sale in the black market. Shah could not tolerate this tendency of some self-seekers, who wanted to fill their coffers with silver and gold at the cost of the common man. He prayed to God to send the messenger of his mercy (rahmat jo relo) i.e. the rain, so that the scarcity, caused due to lack of rain, disappeared, and the black-marketeers were made to repent for hoarding. The grain would then be available in plenty:

حڪم ٿيو بادل کي ته سارنگ ساٿ ڪجن،

وڄون وسڻ آئيون، ٿهه ٿهه مينهن ٿمن،

جن مهانگو لهي ميڙيو، سي ٿا هٿ هڻن،

پنجن منجهان پندرهن ٿيا، ايئن ٿا ورق ورن،

ڏڪاريا ڏيه مان شل موذي سڀ مرن.

Hukum-u thiyo badal-a khe, ta saarang-a saath-a kajan-i,

Vijoon vasana-a aiyoon, tah tah minh-an timan-i,

Jin-i mahaango lahee meriyo, se thaa hath-a hanan-i,

Panjan manjhaan pandhran thiya, ian thaa varq-a varan-i,

Dukaariya deh-a maan, shal-a moozee sabh-u maran-i.

"Cloud was commanded; 'Rain must come',

And cloud obeyed so fain—

Lightnings arrived, rain pattered, poured,
came to remain and reign;
The hoarder who for dearness hoped,
now wrings his hands in vain,
Five multiplied to fifteen; so,
the page has turned again,
The profiteer may disappear,
and cause no longer pain....

He has expressed his resentment at another place also:

ڏور ڏڪاريا ڀڄ مينهن منهن ڏيکاريو

Dur-i dukaariya bhaj-u, minh-a munh-u dekhariyo.

(Get away from here, O blackmarketteer! now that the rain has come.)

Poet of the People

Shah Abdul Latif was undoubtedly a poet of the people in the true sense of the term. He had immense love for his country, her hills and dales, lakes and rivers, flowers and thorns, deserts and pastures, deadly reptiles, and singing birds alike. He travelled a lot and keenly watched the people at their work—the potter at his wheel, the iron smith at anvil, the butcher at his piece of log (adi), the fisherman with his net on the Kinjhar lake, the camel-driver in the desert, the washerman with dirty linen on the bank of the river, the jewellers examining the pearls, the trader sailing off on business trip to a foreign land and seen off by his sorrowing wife, rustic bellies drawing water from deep wells at early dawn, earth-diggers setting off for their work with spades on their shoulders, thieves coming out on the streets at dead of night, the yogis engaged in their tough tasks, the bard singing the glory of the glorious ones, the house-wife spinning at the wheel and grinding at the stone, etc. etc. He used simple language and home-spun similes and analogies to communicate with the masses. That is why

his poetry is popular with all shades of people—rich and poor, men and women, young and old, and educated or illiterate. His verses are sung even upto this day by them while they are at work. He is a living poet and a poet of the people the world over. In his tribute to Shah, T.L. Vaswani, a saint and a poet of modern times said, "I do not regard him as a provincial poet. To me Shah is a poet with a message for humanity."

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Anwer Pirzado

POET OF SINDH'S PERENNIAL PATHOS

Being at the tail-end of Indus river, Sindh is inflicted either by the floods or by drought and famine. A Sindhi proverb says that,"the tail-end is either inundated or dried up". In both cases, the people of the lower Indus valley are destroyed time and again either by the floods and epidemics which follow or the drought conditions which culminate into famine in case there is scarcity of water in Indus and there are no rains.

However, if the tail-end people are given the chance to chose any of the two, they would naturally feel themselves between the fry-pan and the fire but would naturally opt for the floods rather than endure the pangs of the famine. The village people of Sindh say that,"Inundation is better than drought." It is because the floods irrigate the land for natural vegetation which greatly help in creating a favourable environment for life to flourish in the land, besides creating havoc with the crops , straw huts, cattle-heads and human beings along with their property,

The drought conditions caused by the dearth of water turn whole of the land barren where the green leaf disappears and the earth gives the look of the moon where there is no human or animal life. In such conditions the crops are destroyed, livestock is perished and human casualities also take place. So, the peoples' wisdom suggests that floods are better than famine.

Bhitai being the poet of the perennial pathos of Sindh has depicted the ravages of drought and famine in Sindh. He has expressed an ancestral fear rising out of blood born of ten thousand years of drought and famine in the centuries old history of Sindh. The other perennial

problems confronting Sindh, as indicated in Risalo - the poetic collection of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, besides water scarcity, are hunger, disease, frequent and repeated foreign invasions, internal strife in the social fibre of Sindh and the filth of personal ego, malice, hypocracy, economic exploitation, profiteering, crime against woman and other social evils rooted into the innerself of the individual and the society as a whole.

Here I shall concentrate mainly on the issue of water , as depicted by Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai , as one of the many perennial pains endured by the people of the lower Indus valley either at the hands of nature or Man.

جتي ڳهوريو ڳهاتئين، تتي واريءَ ٻٺَ،
سهسين ساٽي مُٺَ، سَر سُڪو سونگي ويا.

Jite ghoryo ghatuen, tite waree-a buth-a,
Sahsen saatee muth-a sar-u suko soongee gyaa.

Where fishers used to seek the fish,
the barren sand dunes lie;
Fish-sellers ruined, the river dry;
the tax collectors gone.

نڪا ٻوءِ بازار ۾، نڪا ڇلر ڇٽَ،
جتي ڏنڀرين جي اڳي هئي اڪٿَ،
سي پڙ پسئو پٽَ، ماڙهو وڃن موٽئا.

Nakaa boo-i baazaar-i mein nakaa chhilir-a chhat-a,
Jite dambhryan-i jee age hu-ee akhut-a,
Se pir-a pasyo pat-a marhoo wanjan-i motya.

The bazar is without fish-smell,
while market formerly
With small carps, and with herrings too
abundantly did swell.

Now there is not a shrimp to sell

buyers have empty hands.

(Sur Ghatu)

The root cause of this tragedy is the drying up of the river due to which sand is drifting to and fro at the places which formerly were the fishing grounds of Sindh. The economic adversity emanated out of the drying up of the river has ended up in the destruction of the fish market, the fish being one of the major exportable commodities of Sindh in the past, and in the present. In future too, fish has to remain one of the major sources of livelihood in Sindh, as fish export has been one of the major foreign exchange earning trades after rice and cotton.

In Sur Kapaitie (Spinner), Shah Latif 's heart aches at the destruction of the cotton crop of Sindh. He beholds no cotton-pods in the fields, no spinners of cotton and empty bazar sans cotton trade :

نہ سي وؤنڻ وڻن ۾ نہ سي ڪاتياريون،

پسئو بازاريون هينئڙو مون لوڻ ٿئي.

Na se waoon-a wanan mein na se kaatyaryoon,

Pasyo baazaaryoon heen-aro moon loon thiye.

I neither see same cotton - pods

nor spinners are the same -

So empty the bazar became

to see it, breaks my heart.

ڪتي ڪتي ڪالهہ، اڄ نہ آتڻ آئيون،

ارٽَ اکلي مالهہ، پُوري ويون نجهرا.

Kate kate kaalh-a, ajj na aatan-a aayoon,

Arit-a ukhlee maalh-a, poore wayoon nijhraa.

The spinners, spinning, spinning were _

but now not one I spy _

Spinning wheels in disorder lie,

and sitting huts are closed.

After drying up of the river, Bhitai laments over vanishing of the lake water in Sur Dahar (Desert). He converses with a tree, locally called, "Kando" (thorn), standing on the bank of the lake thus:

سچ ڪِ سڪو ڍورُ، ڪنڌيءَ اڪ ڦلهاريا،

جُنگن ڇڏيو زور، سَر سُڪو، سونگي گيا؟

Sach-i ki suko dhor-u, kandhee-a akk-a phullariaa,

Jungan chhadyo zor-i, sar-u suko, soongee gyaa.

The lake is dry, and brushwood grows

about the dusty banks;

And human being rarely shows

his face about the place.

ڪرڪي ڳالهڙيون ڪنڊا! ڍور ڌڻين جون،

ڪيئن سي راتڙيون، ڪنهن پر ڏينهن گذاريئي؟

Kar ke gaalhryoon kandaa, dhor-a dhani-un joon,

Keen-a se raatryoon, Kanhin par deenhan guzaryaee.

Relate to us some tale, O thorn;

tale of this lake relate;

Of moonlit- nights that did adorn

the place, and how you fared.

ڪر ڪا ويهي ڳالهہ، ڪنڊا ڍورَ ڌڻين جي،

هھڙي اڄ حال، ڏکيا ڏينهن گذارئين.

Kar kaa wehee gaalh-i, kandaa dhor-a dhani-un jee,

hahire ajj haal, dukhyaa deenhan guzaaryen.

Be calm and tell us what you know

of keepers of this lake.

Today in wretched plight and woe

difficult days you pass.

جان تو هُئڙو، ڪنڌا! ڍور ڌڻين جو،

متي لامن ٻور، موريءَ مَنجَر نه ڪرئين.

Jaan huaro.soor-u, kandaa, dhor-a dhani-un jo,

Mathe laam-un boor-u, moree-a manjar-a na-keryen.

If for the masters of this lake,

you would such sorrow feel,

How could you lovely blossoms make

and such a wealth of fruit.

The shortage of water in Sindh is depicted by the poet of Sindh's perennial pathos in yet another context, thus:

جان جر هُئڙو جالَ، تان تون مڇ نه موٽيين،

پونديءِ اڄ ڪِ ڪال، سانيويون سانگين جون.

Jann jar-u huaro jall-a, taan toon machh-a na motyen,

Poonda-i ajj ki kaal-a, sanbhooyoon saangyun joon.

When waters ran abundantly

big fish, you wouldn't return;

Today, tomorrow you will be

In net of fishing folk.

متو آهين مڇ، ٿلهو ٿيو ٿونا هڻين،

جا تو پاڻي اَڄَ، تنهن پاڻيءَ پُنا ڏينهڙا.

Mato aanheen machh-a, thulho thyo, thoona haneen,

Ja to bhaanee achh-a, tanhin paneė-a punaa deenhara.

O shark, you grew so over-fat,

butting against all that you met;

Expanse of water now hath set —

Dried is what once you saw. —

The flow of the fresh sweet water rich in silt has diminished in Sindh. The clean, pure and fresh water is gone and the dirty and polluted instead has stayed back causing plight of the divine Swans which are replaced by the ugly cormorants habitual of the filth and stinking smell.

سر اهيئي اڳيان، پکي ٻيا ٻيا،
جن لمئو لاتيون ڏنيون، سي ويچارا ويا،
پاتوندر پيا، وڃي ڪينجهر ڪنڌين.

Sar-a uhe-ee agyaan, pakhee bya bya,

Jin lamyo laatyoon, dinyoon, se weecharaa wya,

Patoondar-a pya, wanjeen keenjhar-a kandiyen.

The lakes are the same, but different birds

now in their waters lave . . .

Ah ... those with graceful necks, who gave

sweet songs, flew far away.

اڇو پاڻي لڙ ٿيو، ڪالوريو ڪنگن،
ايندي لڄ مرن، تنهن سَرَ مٿي هنجڙا.

Achho Paanee lur-u thyo, kaalooryo kangan-i,

Eende lajj-a maran-i, tanhin sar-a mathe hanjraa.

These waters by the cormorants

polluted, soiled they were —

Swans are ashamed to enter there

and never venture near.

Bhitai has symbolised the Swan and the Cormorants as two different , opposite and conflicting characters. The Swans are divine birds who pick the pearls from pure waters and never spoil their beaks with the muddy waters, polluted and dirty, having fish-smell.The Cormorants are contemptuous, ugly birds habitual of the filth. Such symbolism characterises the Swan with human beings desiring fresh flow of the sweet water in Sindh while the Cormorants are taken as ugly men compromising on the vital issue of water thereby accommodating themselves with the dearth of water, causing filthy, polluted, dirty water stinking with fish-smell.

ماڻڪ چوڻو جن جو، هنج حضوري سي،
ڇلر ڇهنب هڻي مڇي ڪين نه اي،
لوڪ نه لکئا تي، جيلاھ پوڻن ٻگهن گڏئا.

Manik-a choono jinjo, hanj-a huzooree se,

Chilir-a chuhinba hanee, machhee kheen-i nae,

Lok-a na lakhyaa te, jelah bhoonan baghan-i gadya.

The Swans divine are those who pick

the pearls from waters pure;

They never soil their beak with mud;

some fishes to secure;

In crowds of cormorants, obscure

They are . . . world knows them not.

In one of his famous verses often quoted by the writers and scholars in the context of water shortage in Sindh, Shah Latif symbolises the Swan with men who feel pain at beholding absence of water in the river. The Cormorants don't do so as they are accustomed to filth and bad smell of the small waters.

سرسڪو سال ٿيا هنجڻ هريو ئي پيرو،

ڪنگ ويچارو ڪير، جو رسي انهيءَ رمز کي.

" Sar-u suko sa'al thiya, hanjh-a hariyo ee per-u,

Kang-u vechaaro ker-u, jo rasay innahee-a ramz-a khe."

" The water has dried up, and years have passed by,

But the foot of the Swan continues to remain wet.

The poor Cormorant is nobody to perceive such a mystery."

The obvious explanation of this verse of Bhitai suggests that the Swan, lamenting over the dearth of fresh sweet water continues to shed tears which keep its feet wet even if the water has dried up since years. The Cormorant habitual of living on stagnant small waters can never perceive this mystery.

Shah Latif has compared such characters with the " cut-down, chopped off trees", saying :

ڏريان ئي ڏار جي وڍي وڻ جدا ڪيا،

تن سُڪن کهڙي سار ته ڪي اٿا مينهن ملير تي.

Dhuriya'an ee dhaar-a, Je wadhay wann-a judaa kiyaa,

Tinn sukan kehri saar-a-i, ta ke uthaa meenhan Malir-te."

" The trees which are chopped off completely from their bottom cannot have any concern whether it has rained on Thar or not ?

In Sur Saarang and Marui, Bhitai has portrayed great pathos of earth wanting rains in summer. And thus perceiving whole of the phenomenon of water crisis in Sindh, says sarcastically :

پاڻيءَ مٿي جهوپڙا مورک اڃ مرن.

"Pani-a mathay jhoopraa, moorakh-a unj-a maran-i."

" Only foolish having huts on the water bank die of thirst."

Here Bhitai laments the wisdom of the riparians who have managed their water resources, rivers and lakes in such a way that they, or some of them, are dying of thirst, or so to say confronting acute scarcity of water for cultivation and drinking purposes. Water crisis can be created either by nature or by man. In principle, the man being the Lord of the Earth must strive hard to counter the Nature even for creating any such crisis in his land. But Man who has not, as yet, been fully civilized and properly cultured is cutting his own feet with his own axe by tampering with nature unwisely thereby destroying his water sources.

In one of his verses Shah seems shocked to see massive destruction of Sindh's jungles due to which there is no human activity. There are no dogs, no barkings of the dogs and no noise of the hunters. The jungle has bursted out in cries over the plight of the hunters. The hunter is the symbol of "life" in the land surrounded by thick jungles.

ڪتا نہ ڪوڪار، نہ سي سڏ شڪارين،
پٽيو ڪٽي پار، جھنگل آهيڙن کي.

Kuta na kookar-a, na se saḍ-a shikaryen,

Pityo khanee paar-a, jhangal-u aaheran khe.

" No dogs, nor their barkings are there,

No hunters, nor their loud cries are heard,

The Jungle is wailing with cries ,

Over plight of the hunters.

Bhitai is the poet of Sindh's perennial pathos because he doesn't want to see the sufferings of Sindh and its people. He desires to see a free society in Sindh where there is no ruthless authority, no famine and no dearth of water and vegetation in Sindh. What he dreams about Sindh, is his desire to see in the entire world. So, Bhitai's Sindh Dream is his World Dream.

سائين سدائين ڪرين مٿي سنڌ سڪار،
دوست مٺا دلدار عالم سڀ آباد ڪرين.

Saaeen Sadaaeen kareen mathe Sindh Sukar-a,

Dost-a mithaa dildaar-a aalam-a Sabh-u aabaad kareen.

Oh ! my Saeen !

May you keep Sindh green

For ever,

Sweet loving Friend !

Bestow prosperity on the world entire!.

Sahar Imdad

SHAH LATIF AS A POET

Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai is the greatest poet of Sufi movement in Sindh and his poetry is quite visibly coloured by the charisma of Sufism. Yet he has revealed and portrayed hard facts of social life in Sindh under the shadow of his mystic poetry. It is the social content of Bhitai's poetry.

It was certainly the requirement of the age Bhitai lived in, as none would dare utter a word of truth to the authority publicly. Nobody was allowed to portray the pains of poor and downtrodden, raise voice for them, write or sing for them. In such a hostile environment, poets create their own symbolism in poetry which enables them to express thoughts otherwise intolerable for the powers that be, of the times.

In medieval ages the most powerful movement against feudalism and orthodox clergy was launched by the mystics from the platform of Sufistic poetry. Their movement was disguised under the attire of spiritualism, but if understood between the lines, the sorrows of the deprived souls, the prejudice, discrimination, narrow-mindedness and tyranny of the upper classes were depicted therein, besides other hard facts of life.

The poets and philosophers use their genius as a weapon against tyranny of the time, injustice and out-dated customs and traditions just to have an overall improvement in the society. So, whenever and wherever there is tyranny at its height, creative writers and poets create symbols which enable them to pour out every piece of truth buried in their hearts.

The symbols are understood and perceived by different people in different ways as per their imagination. It is in fact the miracle of the poetic symbolism of Shah

Latif that it conveys many interpretations, numerous shades of meaning in different periods and lands.

So, it is the greatness of the genius of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai that different people interpret his poetic symbols in different ways. This characteristic of his poetry is unique in itself. It provides a solid proof of the multi-dimensional characteristic of Shah Latif's poetic symbolism.

However, Dr. Earnest Trump and other European scholars view Bhitai as a great 'mystic' rather than a great poet. They think that the entire tone of Shah Latif's poetry is mystical while the poetry itself is deeply religious throughout. On the other side our indigenous writers relied more on the European authors who first published 'Risalo' (collection of Shah Latif's poetry) with their own interpretation of its poetic symbolism.

"Bhitai has been grossly misinterpreted here and abroad. Such a tragedy began with the very discovery of the greatest genius of Sindh - Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, by the non-indigenous scholars especially the European authors and Christian missionaries".

Anwer Pirzado writes further more in the same article, " Most of the indigenous writers living in the colonial era followed the conformist line - the same old view of interpreting Bhitai in favour of the status quo." And the same authors were taught in schools where the children of the new generation learnt about Bhitai, what the conformists had ever visualised.

Dr. H.T.Sorley has divided poetry of Shah Latif into three parts. The one coloured by the charisma of Sufism; the other portraying pastoral life of Sindh; and the third revolving around the Sindhi folk-stories of love.

"The first contains poems that may be described as primarily mystical in form and expression, the second category includes poems that describe characteristics of Sindh's rural life, while the third category which forms the

great bulk of poetry comprises the Sindhi love - stories."

following this, a circle of people established monopoly on the interpretation of Shah Latif's poetry, disallowing and resisting any other view on Risalo. Thus the great poet, such as Bhitai, was never introduced to the world as a poet, while locally he was introduced merely as a saint. It is perhaps therefore that the people go with reverence to the mausoleum of Shah Latif, put a floral wreath or spread a sheet of cloth on his last resting place, pray for the realisation of their unfulfilled desires and use 'Risalo' merely as a " fortune - teller."

Dr. Tanveer Abbasi has rightly observed that, " most of the poetry of Shah Latif is dyed in Sufi colour, but that does not mean that nothing else except sufism is present in it. So if we consider any single interpretation of Shah Latif's poetry as final, we would simply belittle the scope of his great poetry besides undermining the poetic symbolism of this great poet."

Almost all Surs (chapters) of Latif's 'Risalo' have been interpreted with distortion, but the case of Sur Kalya'an is typical as the very first verse of this very first chapter of Risalo begins with the praise of God and his prophet. Quoting this verse some authors of Risalo have proclaimed their verdict saying that Shah Latif had nothing to do with the wordly affairs and his whole life was spent in preaching religious education to the masses.

It is a known fact that Shah Latif never sided with the religious bigotry, obscurantism and sectarianism. Like every great poet of the world he preached love, truth and beauty and remained above all petty considerations of the day-to-day life. So it will be unjust to the art of poetry if we impose our subjective interpretation on 'Risalo' and belittle the scope of Shah Latif's multidimensional poetry which is universal in its approach.

Extracting spiritual meaning out of the verses of Shah Latif with or without rational justification is exactly what G.M.Syed, the veteran politician, had done in his

book, " Paighaam-e-Latif" by imposing metaphor of Sindhi nationalism on the poetic symbolism of " Risalo."

Akram Ansari has observed in his book, "Symbolism in Latif's Poetry" thus : " A poet of his (Bhitai's) stature and eminence does not persuade, does not preach, does not take sides and does not argue. He whispers the conclusions revealed to him intuitively, aesthetically and spontaenously."

So when we misinterpret a great poet such as Bhitai we simply dupe ourselves. Secondly, there are people who want to cash on the sanctity and the great name of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai. All such moves lead common people to believe that Bhitai was more of a saint than a great poet.

Shah Latif had perhaps visualised such behaviour of the people living after him, therefore he had thrown the manuscript of his Risalo into the Karar lake located in the immediate south of the Bhit.

He was perhaps apprehensive that after his death his arch enemies would pose to be his friends and will divide people on religious basis whereas he (Bhitai) never believed in such division of the mankind. And that the religious scholars instead of appreciating the great art of poesy in Risalo would ask whether Shah Latif was a " Sunni " or a " Shia " ?

In reply to such a query Shah Latif himself had responded in his lifetime , saying : " I am neither Sunni nor Shia but inbetween the two !" On hearing this the inquirer asked again, "There is nothing inbetween !" And Bhitai declared finally, " I am 'nothing' !"

The question is , would the significance of Shah Latif be diminished if we consider him a 'poet', the genius who believes in universal truth? We must know that the sparkling rays of art emanate from the beacon light of Truth, Beauty and Love ! And 'the merchandise of truth' was bargained by Bhitai as he himself has said in his Sur Sri Ra'ag. It was due to this reason that time had never

overshadowed that appeal of truth Shah Latif made in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Consistent struggle, persistent urge, pursuit of truth, hatred for evil, patriotism, universalism, a powerful "No" to bow down before any form of tyranny, love for freedom, hatred for subjugation, steadfastness in wake of danger, fight against falsehood with unflinching faith and siding with truth are some of the universal values which transcend the limits of time and space.

The great thoughts expressed by Shah Latif in his poetry, the profound contents of his meaning, the variety of the subjects, appropriate diction for the expression of emotions and the rythm augmenting the scope of the meaning of the words make the thought and music one in 'Risalo'. Ezra Pound's ideal poetry contains oneness of music with human emotion. Shah Latif added though to it.

As a result, the poetry of Shah Latif has attained universal significance with its literary and philosophical contents besides his grip on the art of poesy, characterised by oneness of his thought and music.

Dr. H . T . Sorley in his world-famous book, " Musa Pervagans", recognises Shah Latif as the greatest poet of the world and believes that although the contents of his poetry are mystical yet the message incorporated in it is visible without any ambiguity. G. M. Syed also says that Shah Latif's characters are great lovers who never weigh their head while getting ready to sacrifice everything for their great ideals.

The Risalo of Shah Latif opens with Sur Kalyan. The literal meaning of "Kalyan" is 'peace'. And to attain peace, sometimes war becomes inevitable . It is perhaps therefore that Sur Kalyan contains verses portraying war scenes, the battlefield where limbs and other human organs are shown chopped off and torn apart lying scattered here and there. The moth revolves around the candle and is burnt to ashes in pursuit of light. The lovers drink the cup of wine symbolised as poison.

" The poison-drinking lovers, lured

by poison sweet, drink more and more;

عاشق زهر پياڪ وهه ڏسي وهسن گهڻو،

ڪڙيءَ قاتل جا هميشه هيراڪ،

لڳين لنءُ لطيف چئي فنا ڪيا فراق،

توڙي چڪن چاڪ ته به آه نه سلن عام کي.

Aashiq-a zehr piyak, wih-u disee wehsan ghano,

Kare aeen qaatil-a jaa hamesh-a herak,

Lagyan Laoon Latif chaï, fanaa Kiya firaaq,

Tore chiknan chaak ta bi·aaha na salin aam khe.

To bitterness of fatal cup,

the poison-drinkers are innured,

Though wounds are festering, and uncured,

no whisper to the vulgar goes. _ (Tr. Elsa Kazi)

However, it is deplorable that a poet like Shaikh Ayaz writes, while analysing the first lines of Sur Kalyan, pertaining to the Almighty Allah thus saying: " Mysticism has done to our nation what opium did to China." In fact he has ignored Sur Kalyan as a whole which contains verses like the following one :

سوريءَ سڏ ٿيو ڪا هلندي جيڏيون،

وڃڻ تن پيو نالو نينهن ڳنهن جي.

Sooree- a sad-u thyo ka halndee jediyoon

Wanjan tan pyo, naalo neenh-a ginan je.

" There is a call to gallows, friends,

will any of you go ?

Those who talk of love may know

to gallows they must speed.

Perhaps Ayaz was annoyed by the first line of Shah Latif's verse , which says :

اڻ چوندن مَ چئو، چوندن چيو وسار،

"The inoffensive don't offend and forget who do offend."

He perhaps did not comprehend the last line of the same verse, saying :

مفتي منجهہ وهار، تہ قاضي ڪانئارو نہ ٿئين،

" A Lawyer keep within, O friend, to blush not, facing judge."

Shah Latif considers Love a prime force to inspire human beings for seeking the path of truth. Love with God, with man, some great ideal or homeland takes man to his destination. The pains endured in the path pave the way to reach the goal. The lovers suffer but do not consider anything as an obstacle in the way to attain the unattainable. It is therefore that Shah Latif stresses on the "urge" and "struggle". The gallows are the wedding bed for the lovers.

اصل عاشق پنهنجي سسي نہ سانڍين،

لاهيو سر لطيف چي، ساهہ سلهاڙيو ڏين،

ڪلهنئون ڪورين، پڇن پوءِ پريتڙو.

" The genuine lover, for his head

care and concern has none;

He cuts it off _ joins it with breath

as gift then hands it on ;

Craves down to shoulders, from loved-one

then begs for love's return.

With high poetic perception Shah Latif has textured great values of life in his poetry. The poet belongs to the world, with strong roots into his own homeland . Shah Latif is a genius of his times, a genius who can be born only once.

Kaleem Lashari

MIRZA MUGHAL BAIG OR MIRZA BAIG ARGHUN (father-in-law of Shah Latif)

Through Historical & Archaeological Evidence

The poetry of Sindh's greatest poet Shah Latif has enriched every Sindhi knowing person in more than one way. He was the only intellectual of a class to breakaway from the prevailing intellectual dominations. He found in the life of the country men, in their every day doings and in folk stories, a subject for poetical treatment. Shah brought out the inherent genius of the Sindhi Language(1) His Love filled songs, fully entrenched in the romances of the land, have made the hearts of masses throb with ecstasy. But his own love life has not been brought to fore by the scholars.

Uptil now, nothing is written about the life of the poet, that could be termed as a satisfactory account. H.T. Sorley asserts that there will never be one,(2) the reason for it is that the oral traditions, being major source, were not quite adequately analysed and recorded. However the few attempts made in the later half of the nineteenth century, fell victim to common tradition of Sayed worship and belief in miraculous powers of the saints.

Mirza Kalich Baig is so often termed as a competent student of Shah Latif's life,(3) Dayaram Gidumal and Lilaram Watenmal also did studies in the life of the poet(4). Professor Gurbuxani's work on the poetry of Shah Latif is appreciated as a work of real scholarship, but he too has not been able to bring things further than the already recorded traditions about his life(5).

Very little is known about his personal life and only one anecdote is often repeated, which led to his marriage. Even the identification of the family, with whom Shah Latif was tied in matrimonial relationship, has not yet properly

been made. The tradition says that the poet and his parents shifted during his early childhood to a place called Kotri, where an elite family resided. These Mughals were devotees of Habib Shah, father of Shah Latif. One day a young lady of their Haveli, daughter of Mirza Baig Arghun fell ill. As per normal practice, a runner was dispatched to Habib Shah, to come and administer the prayer, for the recovery of the lady. Incidenly Habib Shah was sick himself. The ailing father thought it fit to depute Shah Latif, instead.

On the arrival of the poet at the Haveli, normal "pardah" was observed and a chaddar/robe clad lady was brought for the prayer. The young lady extended her hand and Shah Latif, while holding the little finger of the lady's hand, administered the prayer and observing the instant recovery, recited a verse(6)

Whose little finger is in the hand of Syed; she need not worry.

The proud Mughals, keeping in veiw the young age of the poet, were annoyed greatly. Every possible interaction with the family was cut. Being the classical case of love at first sight, the poet was affected badly. The idea of union among the families was abhored/apposed vehemently by the proud and haughty Arghuns.

The poet in great distress over the developments, broke away from the place. Three years of wanderings took the poet to many places, enriching his observations and widening his perspective. His return was much celebrated by the awaiting father.

One interesting event again brought the two personalities face to face. The household of the Mughals was one day attacked by some dacoits of neighbouring Dal tribe, while the male inhabitants were away. The servants and kids couldn't resist the attack and were robbed of valueables. On return, faced with the awkward situation, the

elder Mirza Baig was highly enraged. He ordered immediate preparations to avenge the attack.

Fully appreciating the situation, Shah Latif mustered his strength and offered his assistance to Mirza. The proud Mughal refused. The poet insisted, admitting the bravery of Mughals, he emphasized his duty, to assist them in their hour of need; only to meet the stubborn refusal. The poet explained the importance of co-operation; in case the return attack succeeds, the situation would be avenged and the honour of the Mughals would be vindicated, but if he failed and died in the persuit, again the objective of the Mughals would be achieved as he would no more be there to bother them again. To the great disappointment of the poet, Mirza not only refused help but jeered upon the capacity of the poet to be of any use. Distressed, the poet recited a verse in anguish(7).

بيگ تنهنجي بيگڙي ڪوٽڙيءَ ۾ ڪانه،

اٿم آس الله ۾، دل مارينئي مان،

"Baig this high position of yours will never be in Kotri;

I have this hope that the Dals will end your pride."

The attacking Mughals were ambushed and all were slain, only a male child was left to take care of the family. The elder women saw their family's disaster, as a result of the displeasure of Shah Latif. Considering this, they offered a possible union of the families. After much considerations, the poet consented and was married to the daughter of the late Mirza Baig Arghun.

This tradition is narrated in the semi historical accounts, as well as the Tazkiras i.e the biographical narrations compiled immediately after the poet saint's death. Where as the only modern biographical work, by celebrated H.T. Sorley, gives a simple one-sentence statement that "the poet was married to the daughter of a friend of his younger days, Mirza Moghal Baig, who in 1713 (AD), died an untimely death at the hands of robbers.(8)" He has not given any source for this piece of

information.

If we go by the statement of Sorley, it leads us to the hypothesis that the poet married quite late in life. Because by the time the daughter of his contemporary would come of age, he must have been quite advanced in years. Contrary to it the tradition makes it very clear that the poet was deputed to the Mughal household, by his father when he was a youth. And the daughter of the Mirza too was of mature age. Her father too was alive and took exception to the verse recited by the poet.

The date of the death of Mirza Beig is without doubt clear, by the two date-compositions—the oriental art of composing a verse, in which the date of the event is given with the help of already assigned value to different letters of Arabic alphabet. According to that, at the time of the death of Mirza Baig, the poet was 22 years, and this mishap took place at least three years after the recitation of controversial verse by the poet.

Accordingly, if we have to believe the tradition, then the Mirza could not be of the same age as the poet. It is desirable to see the available information about the poet's life in chronological order for better understanding. Shah Latif was born in 1102 AH(9) The year of the death of Mirza Baig is 1124 AH, as deciphered from the interesting date-composition, made by one of the members of the poet's a retinue, on his death "بود خبيث". It is narrated in the famous history Tuhfat-ul-Kiram (تحفة الكرام), written by Mir Ali Sher Qan'i. On hearing this the poet reacted that it is not proper to condemn a person after his death, and it can better be composed like "يک مغل به بوده", "There was a good Mughal". The dates of these two compositions are same i.e. 1124 AH(10)

Shah Latif made preparations and shifted to Bhit Shah, well before the death of his father, who died in 1144 AH. The date is composed by Makhdoom Mohammad Sadiq Naqshbandi (11)

The date of the death of Mirza Baig, given by

Sorley doesn't fully correspond to the date coming down to us through the tradition. Sorley has not given his source, but the tradition regarding it is substantisted by the history of the period.

It is interesting to note that Mir Ali Sher Qan'i, the famous historian from Thatta, was born in 1140 (12). At that time the poet was about 38 years of age and already a famous person. Qan'i, a junior contemporary, is supposedly most authentic source. The account in Tuhfat-ul-kiram substantiates the facts of tradition afore mentioned, thus bringing out the weakness in the assertion made by Sorley. There also exists confusion over the name of the father-in-law of the poet. Sorley has written it as "Mirza Mughal Arghun"(14) Sorley has not indicated his source. In these circumstances, when the contemporary account is clear, we can't rely on Sorley's statement. Sorley might have got this idea through Gurbuxani(15) who on the other hand was, no doubt, influenced by Mir Abdul Hussain Sangi(16). The word Mughal has been used by him, on which authority, he didn't make it clear, except writing: "it is said" "مروي ست"(17).

The point to note is that Sangi has composed some traditions regarding the life and character of the poet in Persian verse. He is proud of his poetic ability, which shows unusual fluency and balance (18) In that particular anecdote he refers to the person, to the whole family, and to the male members of the household as "Mughal" and "Mughals". He has also given "Mirza Baig" as the name of the person, more than once. In the annexure he has admitted the fact that Mirza was an Arghun(19). It can be easily understood that while referring to them as Mughals, he means a caste, "a race", as separate identity and not as a name of an individual. This is clear from this piece of the verse composed by him(20)

که شهر کوتری بد بر بلندی،   عجائب در جوار هاله کندی.

همون آباد بده از مغولان،   مغولان را بوده نعمت فراوان.

بوده سرخیل مغلان بیگ مرزا، بقوم خود سر افروز و توانا۔

It was normal at that particular period of history that the Mughals, as we call them, were never quite impressed with the word. They took pride in calling themselves with the scion or the Baiglars or with the place where their families belonged i.e. Daghastani, Termiz, Nahvandi, Gurgani, Subzwari etc. This fact can be ascertained from the contemporary writings and also from writings on their graves(21). "Mughal" is a derivative of the word "Mongol"(22). The upsurge of the Mongols and their widespread conquest established them fully in Central Asia. The merger of Turkish tribes added to their racial diversity (23) but this fact could not stop them being labeled as Mughuls in the Indian Sub-Continent. The Arghun-Turkhan rule in Sindh also could not affect the general term used for all of them as Mughals(24). Both the Arghuns and Turkhans belonged to Turkish tribes, hailing from Central Asia. They had come to Afghanistan in the wake of Amir Timur's invasion and stayed in Qandhar and Herat during the rule of the successors of Timur(25).

Idraki Baiglari, himself from an elite stock of Central Asia, used the word as Mughals against the locals, meaning all Central Asian immigrants(26).

The genealogical account of the Arghuns and Turkhans of Sindh are very uncertain. Both claim a common descent from Arghun Khan b. Abaqua b. Hilegu b. Tuli b. Chenghez Khan.(27) Although the Arghuns had long been in the service of Temurids and serveral of them fought under Iku Timur for Amir Timur (d. 807/1405 AD) who were rewarded by that great empire builder, for their meritorious services with the exalted Title of "Tarkhan"(28) They were the forefathers of the Turkhans who ruled Sindh. Iku Timur, an Arghun, laid down his life in war, the entire tribe was raised to the status of Turkhan. The Turkhans of Sindh descended from this tribe (29).

The families belonging to the elite groups took due pride in that fact and were also bent on preserving their

status by careful selection, while considering matrimonial relations. This characteristic of Mirza Baig Arghun brought him in clash with the Syed family of Habib Shah. Due to the rude behaviour met to them the Syeds left their place and drifted further towards north of Kotri (30)

Tuhfat-ul-kiram gives the name of Mirza Baig Arghun as the father in law of the Poet. (31) It is not clear how the later writers came to cherish the word "Mughal" and made it a part of the above mentioned name. In the absence of any reference to the sources, we may consider it due to Mir Abdul Hussain Sangi's composition in verse, that the later scholars, including Gurbuxani and Sorley styled it differently.

Let us see how Sangi refers to the person at various places in his verse.

به تپ شد دختر مرزا گرفتار، ازان گردید مغل بیگ لاچار - 32

شنیده چون مغل بیگ آمده شاه، حریمان حرم را کرد آگاه - 33

ز سمع این خبر مرزا شده رنج، کی بوده آن مغل مغرور برگنج - 34

مغل آن دم به انبوه مغولان، بدل غمناک با حال پریشان - 35

گرفته شاه باخود فوج فقرا، بیامد نزد مغل بیگ مرزا. - 36

It is believed that Sangi had access to some persons whose fore-fathers had seen Shah Latif, and thus his knowledge of traditions it recognised.(37) The name is used here without any concern for its normal order, but with an obvious care for balance as demanded by the poetic composition. This might have led to the situation where the word "Mughal", being a general reference term for central Asian stock, affixed to his name, making it Mirza Mughal Baig. The Arghun would never have consented to this novel style of dropping of the prized portion of his name.

In the presence of a clear entry into Tuhfatul-Kiram by Mir Ali Sher Qan'i, we are bound, not to confuse the name Mirza Baig Arghun, any more. Sangi, while, dealing with the various dates of major characters in his book, in the annexure, has recorded the name, where the word "Arghun" is a part of Mirza's name (38), (Sangi clearly

recorded the fact of the Mirza being an important member of the Arghun family.(39)

Admittedly the later day students of Shah's life were carried away with the poetic swings of Sangi and seeing repetition of the word "Mughal" (مغل، مغولان) , understandably went no further to probe into the issue, which seemed all too simple and already settled. In the face of such authorities as Sorley and Gurbuxani, they continued to refer to the name as Mirza Mughal Baig, ignoring the most important part of the name that might have helped in the identification of the family. Instead the word inserted, made things more generalised and the matter remained non specific and vague.

This trend was popular to the extent that even the scholars of the stature of Pir Hussamuddin Rashidi (40) and Dr. N. A. Baluch (41) while editing Maqalat-u-Shu'ara and Tuhfat-ul-Kiram respectively (both the books by Mir Ali Sher Qan'i) inserted the word "Mughal" in the name of Mirza Baig Arghun (42). considering it a deficiency on the historians' part.

It may be termed as a very bold step, not normally taken by research scholars. In the face of very vital and clear evidences, this sort of additions and alterations if considered necessary, are made after giving all reasons, in detail. Here we find no discussion, not even a reference to it. A simple and passive insertion, done and carried further.

When the literary sources are so tampered with, and the errors so popularly carried over, the only hope of correction lies with some chance discovery of an authentic contemporary account, in its original condition, or some archaeological find, which by giving particular information causes required commotion, to bring people to re-consider already held opinions.

Thanks to a recent discovery of a grave in the historical graveyard of Torki (توركي), the inadvertently created riddle stands solved.

The grave is a true representative of the

Arghun/Turkhan tradition, located on a platform adjacent to the famous Baiglar grave yard, in the vicinity of the Tomb of Miyoon Vahyoon, on the west side of Tando Allahyar-Tando Adam road. Elaborately decorated with the inscriptions in Naskh and Nastaileeq, along with conventional decorative motifs, the grave proudly indicates the name of the person buried as Mirza Baig Arghun.

Is this the same Mirza Baig Arghun or some one else?

As far as the location of the grave is concerned, it is situated at about four miles from Hala Haveli, thus quite close to Sui Kandar, where the poet was born and from Kotri, where Mirza Baig resided. The location could be termed as most suitable, as Sui Kandar, and Kotri, are in the vicinity, and above all the cemetery itself belongs to the old allies, with whom the relations went back to Samarqand (43).

It may be argued that there can be more than one person in one particular vicinity/locality, well separated in time, bearing the same name and belonging to the same tribe. But it is near impossible that in such restricted locality and in a particular period there lived two persons with the similar name, both prominent enough to be buried with dignity and decorum, befitting to the elite, without notice. We have no other reference in our history and literature of any other person of the same name.

The father-in-law of Shah Latif, as we have discussed earlier, died in 1124 AH. The year of the death of Mirza Baig Arghun, buried adjacent to the Baiglar graveyard is also 1124 AH.

The box chamber/cenotaph (تعويذ) is place over a low decorated platform, which in turn marks the burial pit over ground. The cenotaph is decorated in the contemporary design of Turkhans and Balglar graves, with inscriptions all around. The cenotaph is sub divided, on both longer sides and the upper surface, facing the sky, in fifteen zones on each side. Nine of these are larger and devoted fully to

Arabic inscriptions. Three smaller zones each are on both corners of each side, four small rosettes are adoring each corner, of each side. The divisions are executed with the help of the conventional chain motif.

The only inscription in Persian is on the southern end i.e. the leg side of the grave. The inscription in Nastaileeq reads:

روز جمعہ بتاریخ بیست و چہارم صفر،
مرزا بیگ مرحوم ابن مرزا خان بیگ ارغون،
وفات یافت 1124ھ۔

The nastaileeq is not executed in a very flowing hand. Obviously the workmanship is not of the same standard as is seen on all other sides. The decorative motif enclosing the box too is wanting completion on one of its four sides. The position of the inscription on the southern end and the decorations and inscritpitons on the other sides of cenotaph, establish the fact that the work on the southern side is of inferior quality and was executed by a different hand.

It is generally observed that the rectangular box cenotaphs were available for the potential customers, ready to be purchased and put over the graves, one side left plain, for the particulars of the deceased to be carved.

The cenotaph is presently broken into two halvea, and some chips are off at corners, suggesting mishandling by non expert culture loving enthusiasts, in their persuit of jungle cutting and site clearing. Need of immediate cognizance by the concerned department/agencies is badly felt.

The geographical position and the date of death makes it certain that the person buried here is the same Mirza Baig Arghun, whose daughter was married to Sindh's greatest poet Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Sorley, H.T: Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit, Sindhi Kitab Ghar, Karachi 1940 & 1986. P 237.

2. I bid P 170

3. I bid P 170

4. Sigma (Daya Ram Gidumal) : Something About Sindh, International Press and Publication Bureau, Karachi 1880 & 1990.

   Watanmal, Lillaram : The life, Religion and Poetry of Shah Latif, The Greatest Poet of Sindh, Karachi 1890.

5. Gurbuxani, Hotchand Molcahnd : Shah Jo Risalo, Karachi 1923 and Shah Abdul Latif Bhit Shah Saqafati Markaz Committee, Hyderabad, reprint 1985 (Sindh)

6. I Bid P 12

7. Baig, Mirza Qalich : Ahval-i-Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, Shikarpur 1900 & Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai Saqafati Markaz, Hyderabad 1972 Reprint (Sindh)

8. Sorley, H.T : Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit, P 173

9. Baloch, N.A. : Shah Jo Risalo, vol 1, Bhit Shah Saqafati Markaz, Hyderabad 1989 P. 10

   where in the date composed by a famous Sindhi poet "Gada" has been given.

سال تولید سلطان بهت،
شنیدم زماتن عنایت شعار،

10. Qan'i, Ali Sher : Tuhfatul Kiram (Sindhi Translation by Makhdom Amir Ahmed. Sindhi Adabi Board, Hyderabad 1957, P 388.

11. Baloch N. A. : Shah jo Risalo, vol 1, P 48.

خلق السانا من السلاله،

12. Rashidi, Pir Hussamuddin : Mir Ali Sher Qan'i Thathvi Galhiyoon Goth-a Vannan Joon, Anjuman Tarikh Sindh Karachi 1981 (Sindh) P 525.

The date composition gives that date

13. Sorley, H.T: Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit, P 173.
14. Qan'i Mir Ali Sher : Tuhfat-ul-Kiram P388.
15. Gurbuxani : Shah Jo Risalo, P-11.

    Gurbuxani has mentioned that Mirza was an Arghun and Shah Baig Arghun was his ancestor, but he has mentioned the name of father-in-law of Shah Abdul Latif without Arghun i.e. Mirza Mughal Baig.
16. Sangi, Mir Abdul Hussain : Lataf-i-Latifi, Anjuman, Markaz Saqafat Shah Abdul Latif, Bhit Shah, Hyderabad 1967.
17. Ibid p 67.
18. Ibid p 70 He concludes the tradition with this verse :

    رسید "عبدالحسینا" این حکایت،

    بطرز عمده برحد نهایت،
19. Ibid P 203.
20. Ibid P 60
21. Spuler, Bertold : History of the Mongols Routledge and Keagon Paul, London 1972 P 6.
22. Ibid P 7.
23. Dani, Dr. Ahmed Hussan Dani : Thatta, Institute of Islamic History, Culture and Civilization, Islamabad, 1982 P 111.
24. Baiglari, Idraki : Baiglar Nama, Sindhi (TR) Khanbahadur Mohammad Siddique Memon. Institute of Sindhology, Jamshoro 1983. pp 9,15,41,42 and 47.
25. Siddiqui, Mahmudul Hassan : History of the Arghuns and Turkhans of Sindh, Institute of Sindhology, Jamshoro, 1972, p 249.
26. Dughlat, Mirza Muhaza Muhammad Haider : Tarikh-i-Rashidi, (English Translation) and Denison Ross, Curzon Press London, 1972 p 55 and n, 3.

27. Jalal, Syed Mir Mohammad Bin Syed : Turkhan Nama (Etd. by Syed Husamiddin Rashidi, Sindhi Adabi Board, Hyderabad 1965.

وگروهي از اعظم السلاطين حضرت صاحبقران امير تيمور گورگان باين
خطاب مستطاب سرفرازي يافتند منجمله آن، قبيله امير ايكو تمراز نژاد ارغون خان
بن ابقا خان بن هلاكو خان بن تولي خان بن چنگيز خان است. در "ظفرنامه
تيموري" مسطور است كه چون امير ايكو تمر در جنگ تقتمش خان، جان نثار
شد. حضرت صاحبقران تمام قبيله او راكه درآن موقف هولناكي ثبات قدم ور
زيده بودند بخطاب "ترخان" سرفراز ساختند و ترخان كه در ولايت سند و قندهار
حكومت نمودند از نسل امير ايكو تمراند.

28. see also Akhtar. M. Saleem : Sindh Under the Mughals, National Institute of Historical and cultural Research, Islamabad 1990, p 4 and 5 f.9.

29. Ibid p.p 4, 5.

30. Baig Mirza Kalich : Ahwal-i Shah Abdul Latif, p 24.

31. Qan'i, Mir Alisher : Tuhfatul Kiram.(Persion) Vol 3, p 152.

32. Sangi, Mir Abdul Hussain : Lutaif-i-Latifi, p 60.

33. Ibid p 61.

34. Ibid p 62.

35. Ibid p 64.

36. Ibid p.66.

37. Baloch, N.A : Shah Jo Risalo, Vol I p 29 and 30.

38. Sangi, Mir Abdul Hussain : Latif-i-Latifi p 203.

39. Baig, Mirza Kalich Baig : Ahwal-i Shah Abdul Latif p 22.

40. Qan'i, Mir Ali Sher : Tuhfatul Kiram, (Sindhi Translation) by Makhdom Amir Ahmed and Etd by Dr. N. A. Baloch. Siindhi Adabi Board Hyderabad 1957.

42. Ibid : Here However the insertion is marked by the brackets : without any reference or note p 386 in

Maqalat-e-Shu'ara, without any the editor (i.e. Hussamuddin Rashidi) spells out his assignment as under:

در تصحیح و تکمیل متن کتاب حتي المقدور کوشیده ام،
و در آنجا که براي توصیح مقصد حواشي را ضرورت دیدم نوشته امو،
در پا ورتي کتاب، مطالب سودمندي را اضافه کرده ام،
که موضح مقصد باشد.

ص - یک

43. Baiglari, Idraki : Baiglar Nama p 3.

ANNEXTURE

The Cenotaph (تعویذ) has inscriptions carved over it on all five sides. The headside i.e. the northern end contains the kalima-e-Tayyab, the confession of faith, only. The southern end has the Katba. It is in Persian. It gives the name and date of death of the person buried. This inscription is in Nastaleeq, for the contents refer to the main article and illustration 1.

The Arabic inscriptions comprise the 67th surah of Al-Quran. Surah Al-Mulk contains two Ruku (رکوع) and thirty Ayat in all. This surah was revealed during the stay of the Prophet at Makkah. It deals with the conception of the Judgement day and the punishment. It is generally believed that this surah intercedes and helps to avert the hardships in the grave. (Tirmizi & Abu Daud)1. Thus it is often seen inscribed on graves.

The complete surah is inscribed in Khate-Thuluth, only one word, (مستقیم) is missing, refer the third line on the eastern side, it being the last word of Ayat No. That couldn'd be inscribed due to lack of space. The next Ayat starts at the top side from the first line, but the word is missing here too. (1 Brailvi, Mohammad Ahmed Raza Khan : Kanz-ul-Iman fe Tarjumat-ul-Quran-Darul Uloom Amjaduja, Maktaba Rizvia, Karachi-1330 AH (Reprint 1976) p. 669).

INSCRIPTION ON EAST SIDE

LINE 1

بسم الله - تبارك الذي - قدير (١) || الذي - الغفور (٢) الذي خلق || - من فطور (٣)

LINE 2

ثم ارجع - وهو حسير (٤) ولقد - الدنيا || بمصابيح - السعير (٥) وللذين كفروا || بربهم - (٦) - (٧) - تميز

LINE 3

من الغيظ - نذير (٨) قالوا جاءنا || نذير - كبير (٩) وقالوا لو كنا || نسمع - السعير (١٠) فاعترفوا - السعير (١١)

INSCRIPTION ON TOP

LINE 1

ان الذين - كبير (١٢) واسروا - او اجهروا به || انه - (١٣) - الخبير (١٤) هو || الذي - و اليه النشور (١٥)

LINE 2

ءامنتم - تمور (١٦) ام امنتم - ان || يرسل - نذير (١٧) ولقد - نكير (١٨) || اولم - بكل شيء بصير (١٩)

LINE 3.

امن هذا - ان الكفرون || الا في غرور (٢٠) امن - بل لجوا || في عتو و نفور (٢١) افمن - على صراط

INSCRIPTION ON WEST SIDE

LINE 1

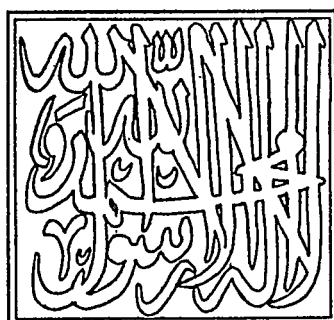
قُلْ هُوَ الَّذِيْ - وَالْأَبْصَارَ || وَالْأَفْئِدَةَ نَشْكُرُوْنَ ۝ قُلْ - وَإِلَيْهِ || تُحْشَرُوْنَ ۝ - ۝ قُلْ إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ

LINE 2

عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ - مُّبِيْنٌ ۝ فَلَمَّا - الَّذِيْنَ || كَفَرُوْا تَدَّعُوْنَ ۝ قُلْ - أَهْلَكَنِيَ || اللّٰهُ - عَذَابٍ أَلِيْمٍ ۝ قُلْ هُوَ

LINE 3

الرَّحْمٰنُ - فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ || مُّبِيْنٍ ۝ قُلْ مَّعِيْنٍ ۝ || صدق الله صدق الله العلي العظيم وصدق رسوله النبي الكريم

NAME OF INSCRIBER

KALIMA ON HEAD SIDE

KATBA ON SOUTH SIDE

N
TO SEHWAN
HALA
OLD HALA
BHIT SHAH
KOTRI MUGHAL
INDUS RIVER
DADU
HALA HAVELI
HYDERABAD
KOTRI
INDUS
PLACES
RELATED TO SHAH LATIF'S LIFE
MILES
ROADS
RAILWAY LINE
MODERN TOWNS
HISTORICAL REFERENCES

INSCRIPTION ON EAST SIDE

LINE 1

بسم الله - تبارك الذي - قدير (1) || الذي - الغفور (2) الذي خلق - || من فطور (3)

LINE 2

ثم ارجع - وهو حسير (4) ولقد - الدنيا || بمصابيح - السعير (5) وللذين كفروا || بربهم - (6) - (7) - تميز

LINE 3

من الغيظ - نذير (8) قالوا جاءنا || نذير - كبير (9) وقالوا لو كنا || نسمع - السعير (10) فاعترفوا - السعير (11)

INSCRIPTION ON TOP

LINE 1

ان الذين - كبير (12) واسروا - او اجهروا به || انه - (13) - الخبير (14) هو || الذي - واليه النشور (15)

LINE 2

ءامنتم - تمور (16) ام امنتم - ان || يرسل - نذير (17) ولقد - نكير (18) || اولم - بكل شيء بصير (19)

LINE 3.

امن هذا - ان الكافرون || الا في غرور (20) امن - بل لجوا || في عتو ونفور (21) افمن - على صراط

INSCRIPTION ON WEST SIDE

LINE 1

قُل هُوَ الَّذِیٓ - وَالاَبصَارَ || وَالاَفئِدَةَ تَشكُرُونَ ۝ قُل - وَاِلَيهِ || تُحشَرُونَ ۝ - ۝ قُل اِنَّمَا العِلمُ

LINE 2

عِندَ اللهِ - مُّبِينٌ ۝ فَلَمَّا - الَّذِينَ || كَفَرُوا تَدَّعُونَ ۝ قُل - اَهلَكَنِيَ || اللهُ - عَذَابٍ اَلِيمٍ ۝ قُل هُوَ

LINE 3

الرَّحمٰنُ - فِي ضَلٰلٍ || مُّبِينٍ ۝ قُل - مَّعِينٍ ۝ || صدق الله صدق الله العلي العظيم وصدق رسوله النبي الكريم

Dr. Fahmida Hussain

BHITAI'S PHILOSOPHY OF PATHOS

Shah Abdul Lateef Bhitai is the thinker-poet of Sindh. Some people, however, consider him a great Sufi poet and find his poetry a vehicle for the Sufi doctrine only. There is yet an other class of people that is unconcerned with his being a poet and adorn him as their spiritual guide and go to his shrine to pray for the fulfilment of their unaccomplished desires.

It is often discussed in various literary circles as to whether Shah Latif is more of a mystic saint, a poet par-excellence or predominantly a great thinker and philosopher. In this context one can say that there are many great saints and spiritual guides buried in the soil of Sindh and by the grace of God Sindh does not lack in having poets of high calibre. What makes Shah Latif great is his powerful vision and unique way of presenting his philosophy of life and death, doctrines of mysticism and religion concepts of love and humanism through the famous love stories of the land, using his supreme art of poetry and music, in the popular language of the people.

As far as the wisdom and philosophy is concerned, in the absence of any written record the wisdom of a thinker or the philosophy of a philosopher travels from the past to the present and onwards to the future either through oral tradition or literature, espacially poetry. It is also a fact that in the absence of any written record the spread of philosophy needs the support of poetry, more so because oral tradition seldom carries forward complex philosophical contents to the new generations in their original spirit.

However, in general a philosopher merely through his philosophy and a thinker merely through his wisdom cannot communicate to the world effectively, while a poet

or a philosopher survives in the memory of the world for long through the vehicle of poetry. If a philosopher is also a poet, he does not need any other support and survives in the memory of people through the power of his poetry, provided, that school of thought does not become obsolete and the philosophical movement does not lose its relevance.It is also necessary to add in this context that poetry should be composed in the natural language of the masses and the language thus used should have the capaity to express great thoughts. In fact great thoughts can only be carried forward through poetry which is composed with great artistic skill and is supplemented by aesthetic beauty, imagination, great passion and beautiful diction. Such great poetry has the potential to travel beyond the barrier of time, from the past to the present and from the present to the near and distant future. Such poetry is capable of making its creator immortal. And besides creativity, such poetry also contains certain elements which appeal to the intellect and emotions of the people. Ideology, thought, philosophy and mysticism play a vital role in such poetry.

According to Dr. Salim Akhtar, a critic of Urdu language, "The dominant factor in the poetry of Mir Dard is mysticism, while in that of Ghalib it is his rationality, in Iqbal it is the philosophy and in Faiz - the ideology".

Like wise Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai, being a thinker-poet and artistic philosopher, extended the orbit of his thought and philosophy beyond his own times, so much so that even after the lapse of more than two hundred years the utility and validity of his poetic aesthetics has not diminished. In his unsurpassed poetry we find beautiful amalgamation of mysticism, rationality, philosophy and ideology at the same time.

While going through his poetry one can not miss his reference to life and death, to different manifestations of life and also to his philosophy pertaining to the perception of future based on the needs of the present, incorporated in his rational approach.

He also sets forth guidelines for living in the

perspective of the socio-economic and political conditions of his times. The conceptions of fate and human effort, submission and defiance, patience and continous struggle usually seem to be in contrast with each other. These elements infact indicate to his unique style of realism which is synonymous to the consciousness of life.

This conflict in the philosophical conceptions in the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai can be justified. When success is not in sight, instead of getting desperate, he advises to remain patient and be contented considering it an exigency of fate. If there is any possibility of meeting the goal through effort and struggle, he suggests continued struggle during which even death can be welcomed. To make possible the impossible through determination and unflinching faith, he gives courage even to clash with mountains, and if there is possibility of intensification of the sense of failure and haplessness, he suggests to adopt 'patience' and be contented.

"For the sake of truth don't desist even from sacrifice of life, and in the case of falsehood, don't pay heed to any temptation or threat", is his message. "Forget and forgive if there is any clash with a friend, but if it is an enemy, don't desist even from taking the sword":

هو چوڻئي تون مَ چئُو واتان ورائي.

"Hoo chavan-aee, toon ma cha-o, waataan wara-ay".

"If they utter vile words, you must not return the same."

This is for the friends. And for the enemies, he says:

هڻ ڀالا وڙهه ڀاڪرين آڏي ڍال مَ ڍار.

Han Bhaalaa wirh bhaakren aadee dhaal-a ma dhaar.

" Strike with spear , fight man to man,

Do not protect yourself with the shield".

As far as the sensibilities and emotions of poets are concerned, every poet deals with the conceptions of love and hate, joy and sorrow, union and separation altogether in a different way. Thus every poet possesses an exclusive style which usually becomes his or her own identification.

Ghalib's philosophy of love is certainly different from that of Iqbal. Similarly Mir Taqi Mir's philosophy of Pathos is different from that of Ghalib.

The philosophy of Pathos with Shah Latif is totally different from other poets. The reason could be his level of consciousness and awareness. about the pathos of his age. He considers sorrow as his friend and pathos his companion.

Why is it so?

Pathos is said to be "that quality in a work of art which evokes feelings of tenderness, pity or sorrow." I once read some where that" 'Pathos', instead of blood, flows in the veins of the people of Indus valley and it is not fate that is written on their palms, it is in fact the history of their art and philosophy." I think both these factors are inter-related.

The history of art and philosophy is impossible without pathos. For the creation of great art, it is essentially necessary that the artist should have compassionate heart. And if the artist is also an intellectual and a thinker, then his pain has to be doubled. An artist and a thinker is an enlightened and sensitive person.His art and ideology reflect his heart filled with pathos. A great artist must have a heart filled with pathos. Thus the sweetness of sorrows, the fire of grief and the intensified feeling of poignancy count as vital factors leading to the perfection of art.

Shah Latif says :

ڏيکاريس ڏکن گوندر گس پرينءَ جو،

سهائي سورن کئي هيڪاندي هوتِ سين.

Dekhaarius dukhan goondar gas- piryeen-a jo

Suhaa-e sooran ka-ee hekaandee hot-a seen.

" From grief and woe she did obtain

the lead, to walk the way ;

It was from guidance of the pain

she Punhoon found at last."

Punhoon is the beloved of Sasui, Absolute Beauty and Absolute Truth is the ultimate goal of Shah Latif. True artists and wise men usually fall in love with the pains experienced in the way of their struggle for their ultimate goal. The sorrows usually intensify the spirit of struggle. The pains taken in the process of struggle have their own pleasure . Or in other world we can say that it is joy for them what others call pain.This is a glad acceptance of pain and suffering in the path of the beloved.

Fariduddin Attaar, a Persian poet says :

کفر کافر را، دین دیندار را،

ذرہ دردِ دل عطار را۔

" Kufr kaafir ra, Deen deendaar ra --

Zarra-i dard-e-dil Attaar ra ."

Shah Latif also seeks such a thing:

سورَ مَ وڃيجاهہ سڄڻ جيئن سانگ ويا،

پرينءَ پڄاڻا، آءُ اوهان سين اوريان.

Soor-a ma wanjejaah naah, sajjan-a jeen-a saang-a wiya

Pireen-a pujaa-naa aa-oon awhaan seen oriyaan.

" Sweet sorrow, do not you depart

as went away my Love . . .

To none I may pour out my heart

but you, since he has left. "

Shah Latif is not ready to accept joys without enduring sorrows and experiencing pain. He thinks that sorrows constitute the beauty of joys :

ڏک سکن جي سونهن گهوريا ڏک سکن ري،

جنين جي ورونهن سڄڻ آيو مان ڳري.

Dukh-a sukhan-i jee soonh-an ghoria'a sukh-a dukhan-i re

Jineen jee wiroonh-a sajjan-u aiyo maan gire.

" Sorrows, joys' beauty constitute;

joys without sorrows spurn;

By virtue of such sorrows' mood

my love comes to my arms."

In fact, a comman feeling of pain with the Beloved, Homeland or Truth happens to be the relationship of love with them. Only through such relationship the ultimate goal can be achieved. This relationship must be the criterion of testing the art and philosophy of the artists and philosophers of any nation.

Shah Latif was the poet of pathos and knew that enlightenment was not possible without pain. He therefore said in words of Leela :

الا ڏاهي مَ ٿيان ڏاهيون ڏک ڏسن،

مون سين مون پرين ڀورائيءَ ۾ ڀال ڪيا.

Allaa daahee ma thiyaan daahyoon dukh-a disan
Moon seen moon piryan, bhoraaee-a mein bhaal-a kya

"O God, let me not clever be,

clever ones sorrows see --

Loved - one all favours did to me

when I was simpleton. "

Here there is no lamentation for being wise nor the aim is to get rid of the pain. It is the confession of the conviction that being wise is to endure pains. Ignorance is bliss for some but for others wishdom is the blessing which everyone cannot be destined to have. Therefore those who cannot dare endure pains must not aspire to be wise.

But Shah Latif was a compassionate poet feeling pain for those he loved — the Homeland, the Beloved and the Truth. He had deeply felt the economic subjugation, helplessness and poverty of his compatriots. He wanted to change their miserable condition. And for that purpose he wanted to create awareness among the downtrodden about their state of affairs in life. He wanted the masses to feel the ordeal of their fellow countrymen and their homeland. Thus he wanted all distressed to unite :

اچو تہ سورن واريون كريون سورَ پچارَ،

Acho ta sooran waaryoon Karyoon soor-a pachaar-a.

" Come-on ! sisters all

Pinched by the pain,

Let's share the pains."

He knew it well that until and unless all those enduring sorrows unite, and feel each others' grief, no breakthrough is possible.

ڏكيون جان نہ مڙن، تان تان ڀڃن نہ ٿئي،

ٻيون هونهين هٿ هڻن، رونديون رڻ واريون.

Dukhyoon Jaan na miran Taan taan bhanan na thiye

Byioon hoon-aee hath-a hanan roondyoon roan waryoon.

" So long as the afflicted ones,

do not gather together,

the lamentation is not possible;

Others merely wring their hands,

weep only those who really wail."

Sorrow, grief, pain and pathos happen to be universal subjects of the poetry of the world, but these subjects and their treatment in Sindhi poetry is altogether different, more so because the common man has always been subjected to grief more than joy while the poets and thinkers depict the pathos of their characters in the Sindhi society quite objectively:

مٺ مٺ سورن سڀڪنهين مون وٽ وٿاڻا،

ڀريون کيو ڀڻان، ويا وهائو نڪري.

Muth-u muth-u sooran sabh kaheen moon wat wathaanaa

Bharyoon kayo bhunaa wiya wiha'aoo nikree

" Every human being has a handful of sorrows,

But I have the bulk of them.

I carry them in the bags for disposal;

But their prospective purchasers are no more."

Such conditions had created despair among the people. It was therefore necessary to shun the feelings of desperation and frustration among the deprived masses. The best way in this context was to convert their sorrow into their strength, so that the unfavourable conditions could be resisted and high morale could be brought up in its place. Shah Latif depicted such a situation thus :

ڏک لڳو ڏونگر ڀريو، ڀينر کاڻي ڀون؛

مناں لاٿو مون، سندو جيئڻ آسرو.

Dukh-u lago doongar baryo bhenar khaanee bhoon,

Manaa latho moon, sando jee-an-a aasro.

" O sisters ! the afflictions have overpowered,

In their wake the rocks burnt and the earth got scorched,

Consequently, I have lost all hopes of survival ."

This is a vital factor in the philosophy of pathos with Shah Latif. It indicates to the social psychology of the present age too, in Sindh. When the whole nation is stricken with grief, the innerself of everyone is wounded. their sorrows are the same and their love universal. Poets like Shah latif consciously try to work on such situations to unite the people, because they know that disunited , scattered and disorganised people cannot do anything for the country and their compatriots. So the uniform feeling of pathos among the masses can ensure unity among them.

It is also a universally acknowledged fact that joyous life makes an individual as well as a nation lazy and a loser. Therefore Shah Latif says :

سو سکن ڏيئي ورهيه وهايم هيڪڙو،

مون کي تنهن نيئي، پير ڏيکاريو پرينءَ جو.

Sao sukhan de-ee wirhu wihayam hekro

moon khe tanhin ne-ee per-u dekharyo pireen-a jo.

" A hundred comforts I will give

and bargain too my head,

If in exchange I may instead

a single sorrow get."

He says further in the words of Sasui :

ڀنڀور جن سکن مون کي ساٿان کاريو،

هاڻي سانءِ ڏکن، تان کي ڏونگر ڏوريان.

Bhambhor jan sukhan moon khe saathaan khaaryo,

Haane saan dukhan, taan kee doongar-a doriyaan.

"Sisters! for pleasures of Bhambhore

the caravan I missed ;

Therefore I now with sorrow sore

the mountains have to search."

It is a fact that an urge for any change or revolution becomes irrelevant for a person who is socially satisfied and leading a life of luxuries. Joys keep people aloof from their aim in life and keep them insensitive to the sorrow of others. Poets and philosophers always attempt to educate the masses to that effect.

In the age of Shah Latif the conditions prevailing in Sindh were quite uncertain. The conspiracies by aliens as well as the local agents were on rampage. Religious bigotry, mullaism and sectarianism were the order of the day. Desperation was being spread on mass scale due to social anarchy and political chaos. In such a situation they needed sympathy from some friend and high morale to be given to them by their true guide.

Shah Latif acted according to the aspirations of the masses. He shared the pain with his people. This relationship happened to be the fuel for the furnace of his poetry. He analysed the society objectively and found that the people had lost all hope and had become unconcerned about their fate due to ruthless exploitation and affliction. People were looking for someone to guide them properly, but there was none to come up to their expectations :

ڏکويون ڏيهان جيڪس لڏي ويون،

هاڻي ڪن ملان، پڇان پرينءَ خبرون.

Dukhoyoon dehaan jekas lade wayoon,

Haane kin malaan, puchhaan pireen-a khabroon.

" Those afflicted have possibly quitted the world, as such

From whom should I try to get news of the beloved!"

Then he guided the people to locate those who were equally afflicted but were so steadfast that they were never ready to sell out their conscience. The characteristics of such people were:

ڏکوين اهڃاڻ ڪلهي ڦاٽو ڪنجرو،

وڃن گوندر گڏيو، لوڪ نہ آڇن پاڻ،

سورن اسان ساڻ، ننڍي ئي نينهن ڪيو.

Dukhoyan uhinjaan kulhe phato kanjro,

Wanjan goondar-a gadyo, lok-a na aachhin pan

Sooran asaan saan nandhe-ee neenh-u kayo.

" Gown torn at the shoulders

Is the sign of afflicted ones,

They conceal from all

While travelling with pain

Sorrows became our love since adolescence."

Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai , as a thinker and philosopher , has given the universal conception of pathos. He has sought consistent struggle to achieve Absolute Truth by making sorrows as beacon light.

سرتيون سور پرينءَ جو سُڄڻ ۾ شامل،

ڪوهيارو ڪامل، مون کي ڏک ڏيکاريو.

Saratyoon soor-u pireen-a jo sunjun mein shaamil,

Kohiyaro kaamil moonkhe dukh-a dekhaaryo.

" O sisters ! the pain gifted by the beloved

Is desert-like,

Perfect Punhoon only

Showed me the path of pathos."

He says again :

سکن واري سَڌ مـتان کا مـون سين کري،

انـدر جـنـين اڏ، ڏونـگـر سـي ڏوريـنـديـون.

Sukan-i wari sadh-a mataan ka moon seen kare,

Andar-a jineen udh-a-doongar-a se doreendyoon.

" Urge for joys no one should

Express to me,

Mount could be tracked by those

Whose innerself is torn into two."

This is the conception of pathos with Shah Latif which can only be understood by those whose heart is filled with an eternal feeling of pain.

Dr. Ghulam Hyder Channa

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN SHAH LATIF'S TIME

Shah Latif stands witness to two different patterns of rule by Moghuls and Kalhoras during his lifetime. Depicting the life of his times truly as a perfect poet he has given social indications which explain to some extent the socio-economic and political conditions prevailing during the last decade of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth century A.D.

The history of Sindh is silent over socio-economic and political developments in Shah Latif's times. Dr. H. T. Sorley has rightly complained about unauthenticity of the books of history written by indigenous authors on the era of Shah Latif.

"The native historious dealing espacially with Sindh are of little help for the times of Shah Abdul Latif, which cover the period 1690-1760.... Tuhfatul Kiram is the most pretentious historical work by an inhabitant of Sindh. There is considerable historical material in Tuhfatul Kiram but it is so jumbled up with items of uncritical credulity and stories of saints, miracle workers and holy men that its total value is small... It is typical of its class and suffers from all the usual defects of oriental chronicles."

Tarikh Kalhora, the book of history written with perception of the present times is also not without demerits while its merits are many. This book of history concentres more on the feats of the kings and royal affairs than the people of working class - the actual creators of history. They had wrongly presumed that Kings alone were the history.

Shah Latif (1690 - 1752) was born in Sindh which was subjugated by the alien forces. The Moghul era proved to be a black storm for the Sindhis. They (Moghuls) divided Sindh into three administrative and political units

ruled over by men of their personal likings. Their men were hostile to the local populace which witnessed insult and injury at their hands time and again.

Poverty and hunger had suppressed the masses completely. Society as a whole had turned to be a tongueless entity. The feudals, merchants and militarymen stood united against the downtrodden and lesser folk who could get their tongues chopped off in case of defiance.

When Shah Latif attained the age of seventeen , the Moghul emperor Aurangzeb died and with his demise collapsed the very wall of the Mughal rule in India. With it change of faces took place in Sindh, where indigenous people replaced the alien Governors. First Sehwan and then Sibi and Qalat were given under the authority of the local Kalhora governors, who consented to be loyal to the Moghul rule.

The Kalhoras were double-edged sword for the Sindhi masses. They were both the spiritual leaders as well as rulers. They were therefore sacred cows, not subjected to any accountability. The masses had to obey them both as Pirs and Rulers and had to pay tax of allegiance on both accounts.

It is said that the Kalhoras were blessed with the crown more so because the Moghul emperors found it difficult to collect revenues from far off places such as Sindh. Thus after resuming power, the Kalhora rulers got engaged in collecting revenue for the Centre, keep sway of the Moghul rue in Sindh, spionage of Iranian court for royal court of Moghuls and guarding mountainous passes on the border etc. The Kalhora rulers were so subjugated by the Moghul Emperors that they never dared to change the prices fixed by the Emperor for Sindh.

Shah Latif's age had witnessed as many as thirty-three (33) battles fought on the soil of Sindh. So shattered by the war economy, the Kalhora rulers seldom could do anything to ameliorate the lot of the downtrodden masses.

They however managed the agriculture of Sindh in a befitting manner. According to Lambrick, Kalhoras were able to achieve in the middle of the eighteenth century

A.D. what Britain had attained in 87 years' rule till 1930 A.D. So it is confirmed that the Kalhoras had put up serious efforts to develop Sindh's agriculture, but their interest did not pertain to the welfare of the masses at all.

Richard Burton has described many modes of taxes imposed on the agriculturists by the Kalhora administration. According to him, functionaries of the government used to make a heap of the grain on the ground at the time of harvest and deducted the share of the government, the spiritual guide or the Pir, the charges of transportation and storage of the grain, besides the charity to be given to the beggars etc. Thus after such heavy deductions whatever remained back used to be given to the peasantry. The Kalhora rulers, however, never brought about any change in the rate of levy imposed by the Moghuls in Sindh.

Shah Latif's age was the climax of the feudal power in Sindh. The centre of power in terms of law, politics and production was none else but the person of the feudal lord. The agricultural estates were being alloted to the people of personal likings while the rest of the commonfolk were treated like herds of animals.

When Shah Latif attained the age of twenty-eight years, the Moghul rulers in collusion with their accomplices - the feudals, waderas, tribal chiefs including Syeds and Palijos of Sindh conspired to martyr Shah Inayat Sufi of Jhok Sharif because he had struggled for the emanicipation of the Sindh's peasantry.

Mir Ali Sher Qaan'i, author of Tuhfatul Kiram says that the troops deployed by the Moghul-Kalhora authority against Shah Inayat Sufi were innumerable and were spread on the ground like ants. The soldiers were brought from Sibi, Dhadhar and the Sindh coast. Mohammad Ibrahin Joyo writes that Mian Yar Mohammad Kalhoro himself had become an arch enemy of Shah Shaheed. So, not only the Kalhora rulers but almost all tribal chiefs of Sindh were involved in an ugly war against the exponent of Sindh's peasantry in the battlefield of Miranpur near Jhok in Thatta district.

In the south of Sindh the wicked rulers martyı Shah Inayat Sufi while they assassinated Makhdoom Abdul

Rehman of Khuhra in the north. Both of these murders were the cases of political assassination. The Kalhora rulers didn't rest till they defeated their own people completely.

So, as a matter of fact the Kalhora rulers were strong enough to defeat their own subjugated masses but in case of invaders they were mere cowards. Except for Brohis, they never confronted anybody in their tenure of power in Sindh. Thus the enemy never felt the necessity of waging war to conquer Sindh during Kalhora rule.

When Nadir Shah attacked Sindh, he did not get resistance of any sort from anywhere. He had a run - over in Sindh with the help of his horsemen and he finally captured Mian Noor Mohammad Kalhoro, who had taken refuge in the Amarkot fort. And after a couple of years Madad Khan Pathan plundered Sindh in its length and breadth without any resistance although he had at his disposal less horsemen than his predecessor. Such brave persons were the Kalhora rulers of Sindh.

If analysed critically, except for the Samma rulers, no other rulers of Sindh ever exhibited their unified strength in the wake of any foreign invasion. According to Dr. Ansa'ar Zahid the tribal feuds of Sindhis never crossed boundaries of their lands and their livestock. They could never get united in the face of any external threat. This phenomenon still exists in Sindh in one way or the other.

The Kalhora rulers of Sindh lacked political perception and administrative capability so much so that during 82 years of their rule, they continued changing their places of capital every now and then. History stands witness that they had chosen eleven places in Sindh for having capital of their state.

Sain G. M. Syed observes, while commenting on the Kalhora dynasty thus: " artificial pomp and glory, puritanism and extravaganza had become integral part of their temperament. For maintaining their high status and going along with their wanton pursuits they never desisted from conspiring , plotting and killing even the saints of Sind. Their main concentration was focussed on perpetuation of their personal power rather than ameliorating the lot of the downtrodden masses."

Visibly Kalhora rulers had ensured the integrity of Sindh and had developed Sindh's agriculture, but their real motive resembled with that of the Britishers who had developed Sindh only from the angle of perpetuating their own political power.

Syed Sibte Hasan writes in his famous book entitled, " Musa se Marx Tak" thus : " The Britishers created the network of metalled roads in Sindh and Hind just to ensure that the local commodities were fetched to the English market speedily ".

The Kalhora rulers were devoid of patriotism and love for the countrymen. When Nadir Shah attacked Sindh, Mian Noor Mohammad Kalhoro left the masses of Sindh forlorn and fled to Amarkot for saving his own skin. His son Mian Muradyab following the footsteps of his father transfered his wealth to Muscat and was himself arrested while fleeing to that destination.

By avoiding confrontation with the enemy, saving royal family and its wealth at the cost of the masses leaving them at the mercy of the invaders and conceding to the defeat the Kalhoras proved lack of statesmanship one their part.

Ibn-e-Khuldun righly observes that, " being laid under tribute is a matter of disrespect and disgust. A proud nation never accedes to such disrespect even if it has to undergo pangs of torture and death ." He says further more, " If you see any nation under yoke, you must think that it is hopeless ".

It can be seen in the pages of history, that the Kalhora dynasty signified nothing but anarchy, bloodshed and religious bigotry. The state organism was predominated by personal and religious concerns. The Kalhora rulers never resisted the writ of their masters - the Moghuls consciously or unconsciously, so much so that when the sway of the Moghuls was over they conceded to the authority of Iran and Afghanistan without any resistance.

The political culture of Kalhoras was so naive that the rulers sacrificed everything including their homeland and blood relationship for the sake of power. Mian Yar Mohammad Kalhoro had written to Emperor Aurangzeb

once : " I have given my sons, womenfolk, wealth and my own life in allegiance to your majesty. Now you may decide whatever you deem fit for me ".

Such a state of subjugation did not end here but moved on to the next generation, so much so that, when Nadir Shah brought Mian Noor Mohammad Kalhoro under seige in Amarkot fort and asked him the reason of his fleeing from the capital, he replied : " My lord ! we have remained as loyal slaves of the King of Hindustan since the times of our forefathers, so I thought your majesty would not trust us if we had reposed our allegiance to your Lordship."

This is how the Kalhora rulers remained subjugated to the alien masters. But even then it is a pity that the Kalhora dynasty is remembered by some historians with pride. So, if history is written with blind faith, it would not serve the purpose.

Many history books on Sindh believe that the Kalhora rule was more peaceful and prosperous than the direct rule of Moghuls in Sindh. Dr. Chhablani says that, " Agricultural output of Sindh had reached the peak during Kalhora dynasty." Erskine has revealed in his famous report on Sindh in 1760 A.D. that there was abundance of grain in Sindh.

Dr. Chhablani quotes Pottinger as saying that, " When Nadir Shah invaded Sindh with the help of five lakh troops, Mian Noor Mohammad Kalhoro served food to all the troops lavishly for sixteen days continuously; and yet there was no cry of the scarcity of grain in Sindh."

No doubt many travellers and historians have spoken high of Sindh's prosperity in the past, yet it has to be analysed whether that prosperity had ever visited the straw hut of the poor or had been limited to the King's palace; whether the poor had any share in that prosperity or was he (the poor) only involved in producing such prosperity !

Burton has remarked in one of his books that the daily food of the Sindhis is simply a bread of Bajra. Lt. James while commenting on the houses of Chandka region, (present Larkana) says that : " The houses here are made of

clay. The houses of the poor are built of wood, straw and grass. There is very small difference between the houses of the human beings and the places where their cattle is kept."

Besides the foreign authors, indigenous writers have also depicted the social life in Sindh. Syed Ali Bilgrami has written largely on India but it has relevance here because the conditions have remained almost the same in Sindh and Hind. He says, " An Indian simply needs a hut to live in, two pieces of cloth to cover upper and lower limbs and a handful of rice for food, and that's all."Dr. Chhablani quoting a Dutch author says that, " The poor in India are seldom familiar with the taste of meat. Their daily food is merely rice, pulses and sauce."

The sufferers were not the poor masses alone; even the merchant class was unhappy with the Kalhora rule. The heavy taxes imposed by the rulers were an obstacle in the way of their trade. There is no evidence to believe that the Kalhora rulers had ever decreased the rates of the taxes imposed by the Moghul rulers on Sindh. Rather they created hurdles in the way of developing trade and commerce in Sindh. It was despite the fact that according to Shahnawaz Sodhar, " the annual tribute of Rs. 20 lakh imposed by Nadir Shah on Sindh was being paid by the industrialists of Thatta."

All these writings of history reveal that the poor in the whole of India were leading a life of misery. The people of Sindh sailing in the same boat remained equally suppressed both in the rule of Moghuls as well as that of Kalhoras. They were destined to be pressed between two grinding stones driven by both the aliens as well as local rulers.

Beholding majestic mosques and mausoleum of the Kings, one cannot visualise the state of the poor in that society. The conclusion drawn on such basis could be meaningless. Whether the wealth spent in service of the dead had ever been shared with those alive , is the question ? The history of Sindh stands witness that the rulers used to consume most of the wealth of the state themselves and used to build their tombs with whatever was left in the exchequer of the state.

Although complete information about the social conditions prevailing in the age of Shah Latif is not available, yet one can see a glimpse of the society the poet lived in. In fact the poet happens to be the mirror of the society. Thus Risalo (poetic collection) of Shah Latif is an explicit account of the socio-economic and political conditions prevailing during Kalhora rule in Sindh.

The verses of Shah Latif depict the life of the people along with their hunger and poverty. There are many references in the Risalo pertaining to the clothing, food and living standard of the common people.

وچينءِ ويتا هُئنِ سانجهيءِ رهن سمهي.

" Vicheen-an vetha hoan-i,
Saanjhi-a rahan sumhee . . . ".
(On the time of meals at noon, they are sitting idle,
And at the time of supper, they lie down to sleep.)

This line of the verse clearly indicates that in the age of Shah Latif (during Kalhora rule in Sindh) there were people who used to sleep hungry for want of food. Such was the state of poverty and hunger in the first half of the eighteenth century A.D. in Sindh.

Although Sindh has been rich in cotton - its exportable commodity and the cash crop, yet the verses of Shah Latif reveal that the poor people had always been in the rags. It means that the producers of riches were themselves deprived of riches.

Portraying the general scene of Thar, Shah Latif says :

ٿر ٿوهرَ گهَر جهوپڙا ٻارڻ جنين ٻوهه.

"Thar thoohar, ghar-a jhoopra, baaran jineen booh-u."
(Thar desert is all Cactus, the houses are straw huts
And their feul is the Booh grass.)

Keeping in view the historic evidence revealed by the verses of Shah Latif, one can say without fear of contradiction that the people in general living under the rule of Kalhoras were poor and powerless while the rulers were powerful and ruthless both.

This volume comprises of articles by various well known scholars, critics and writers, originally written in Sindhi, translated into English by yet another writer and critic Mr. Anwar Pirzado. I strongly feel that these articles translated and put into the form of a book, may prove helpful to a wider circle of readers interested in the sociological study of the great poet of Sindh. It will be felt that little place is given to the sufistic aspect of Bhitai's poetry. This was purposely avoided in the selection of articles, as our desire throughout has been to make this anthology appear different from all the previous anthologies published earlier.

Prof. Dr. Fahmida Hussain

SOCIAL CONTENT IN SHAH - JO - RISALO

Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai Chair, University of Karachi

پڙهندڙ نَسُل . پَ نَ

The Reading Generation

1960 جي ڏهاڪي ۾عبدالله حسين " اُداس نسلين" نالي ڪتاب لکيو. 70 واري ڏهاڪي ۾ وري ماڻِڪَ "لُڙهندَڙ نَسُل" نالي ڪتاب لکي پنهنجي دورَ جي عڪاسي ڪرڻ جي ڪوشش ڪئي. امداد حُسينيءَ وري 70 واري ڏهاڪي ۾ئي لکيو:

انڌي ماءُ ڄڻيندي آهي اونڌا سونڌا ٻارَ
ايندڙ نسل سَمورو هوندو گونگا ٻوڙا ٻارَ

هر دور جي نوجوانن کي اُداس، لُڙهندَڙ، ڪَڙهندڙ، ڪُڙهندڙ، ٻَرندڙ، چُرندڙ، ڪِرَندڙ، اوسيئڙو ڪَندَڙُ، ياڙي، ڪائُو، ياجوڪَڙُ، ڪاوڙيل ۽ وِڙهندڙ نسلن سان منسوب ڪري سَگهجي ٿو، پَر اسان اِنهن سيني وِچان "پڙهندڙ" نسل جا ڳولائو آهيون. ڪتابن کي ڪاڳر تان ڪڻي ڪمپيوُٽر جي دنيا ۾ آڻڻ، ٻين لفظن ۾ برقي ڪتاب يعنيٰ e-books ناهي ورهائڻ جي وسيلي پڙهندڙ نسل کي وَڏڻ، ويجهَڻ ۽ هِڪَ ٻِئي کي ڳولي سَهڪاري تحريڪ جي رستي تي آڻِڻَ جي آسَ رکون ٿا.

پڙهندڙ نَسل (پَ نَ) ڪا بہ تنظيمَ ناهي. اُنَ جو ڪو بہ صدر، عُهديدار يا پايو وِجهندڙ نہ آهي. جيڪڏهن ڪو بہ شخص اهڙي دعويٰ ڪري ٿو تہ پَڪَ ڄاڻو تہ اُهو ڪُوڙو آهي. نہ ئي وري پَ نَ جي نالي ڪي پئسا گڏ ڪيا

ويندا. جيڪڏهن ڪو اهڙي ڪوشش ڪري ٿو ته پَڪَ ڄاڻو ته اُهو بِه ڪُوڙو آهي.

جَهڙيءَ طَرَح وڻن جا پَنَ ساوا، ڳاڙها، نيلا، پيلا يا ناسي هوندا آهن اَهڙيءَ طرح پڙهندڙ نَسُل وارا پَنَ بہ مختَلِف آهن ۽ هوندا. اُهي ساڳئي ئي وقت اُداس ۽ پڙهندڙ، بَرندڙ ۽ پڙهندڙ، سُست ۽ پڙهندڙ يا وِڙهندڙ ۽ پڙهندڙ بہ ٿي سگهن ٿا. ٻين لفظن ۾ پَنَ ڪا خُصوصيِ ۽ تالي لڳل ڪِلَب Exclusive Club نہ آهي.

ڪوشش اها هوندي تہ پَنَ جا سڀ ڪَم ڪار سَهڪاري ۽ رَضاڪار بنيادن تي ٿين، پر ممڪن آهي تہ ڪي ڪم اُجرتي بنيادن تي بہ ٿِين. اهڙي حالت ۾ پَنَ پاڻ هِڪَٻِئي جي مدد ڪَرڻ جي اُصولَ هيٺ ڏي وَٺُ ڪندا ۽ غيرتجارتي non-commercial رهندا. پَنَن پاران ڪتابن کي ڊِجيِٽائِيز digitize ڪرڻ جي عَملَ مان ڪو بہ مالي فائدو يا نفعو حاصل ڪرڻ جي ڪوشش نہ ڪئي ويندي.

ڪتابن کي ڊِجيِٽائِيز ڪرڻ کان پوءِ ٻيو اهم مرحلو وِرهائڻ distribution جو ٿيندو. اِهو ڪم ڪرڻ وارن مان جيڪڏهن ڪو پيسا ڪمائي سگهي ٿو تہ ڀلي ڪمائي، رُڳو پَنَن سان اُن جو ڪو بہ لاڳاپو نہ هوندو.

پَنَن کي ڪُليل اڪرن ۾ صلاح ڏجي ٿي تہ هو وَسَ پٽاندڙ وڏِ کان وَڌِ ڪتاب خريد ڪَري ڪتابن جي ليکڪَن، ڇپائيندڙن ۽ ڇاپيندڙن کي هِمٿائِن. پر ساڳئي وقت عِلم حاصل ڪرڻ ۽ ڄاڻ کي ڦهلائڻ جي ڪوشش دوران ڪَنهن بہ رُڪاوٽَ کي نہ مڃن.

شيخ اَيازَ علمَ، ڄاڻ، سمجهہَ ۽ ڏاهپَ کي گيتَ، بيتَ، سِٽَ، پُڪارَ سان تَشبيهہ ڏيندي انهن سيني کي بَمن، گولين ۽ بارودَ جي مدِ مقابل بيهاريو آهي. اياز چوي ٿو تہ:

گيتَ بہِ جڻ گوريلا آهن، جي ويريءَ تي وار ڪَرن ٿا.

... ...

جئن جئن جاڙ وڏي ٿي جَڳَ ۾، هو ٻوليءَ جي آڙ ڇُپن ٿا؛
ريتيءَ تي راتاها ڪن ٿا، موٽي مَنجهہِ پهاڙ ڇُپن ٿا؛

... ...

ڪالهہَ هُيا جي سُرخ گُلن جيئن، اڄڪلهہ نيلا پيلا آهن؛
گيتَ بہِ جڻ گوريلا آهن........

... ...

هي بيتُ اَٿي، هي بَم ـ گولو، جيڪي بہ ڪٽين، جيڪي بہ ڪٽين!
مون لاءِ ٻنهي ۾ فَرَقُ نہ آ، هي بيتُ بہ بَمَ جو ساٿي آ،
جنهن رِڻَ ۾ رات ڪَيا راڙا، تنهن هَڏَ ۽ چَمَ جو ساٿي آ ـ

اِن حسابَ سان اڻڄاڻائي کي پاڻَ تي اِهو سوچي مَڙهڻ تہ ”هاڻي ويڙهہ ۽ عمل جو دور آهي، اُن ڪري پڙهڻ تي وقت نہ وڃايو“ نادانيءَ جي نشاني آهي.

پَنَن جو پڙهڻ عام ڪِتابي ڪيڙن وانگر رُڳو نِصابي ڪتابن تائين محدود نہ هوندو. رڳو نصابي ڪتابن ۾ پاڻ کي قيد ڪري ڇڏڻ سان سماج ۽ سماجي حالتن تان نظر ڪڄي ويندي ۽ نتيجي طور سماجي ۽ حڪومتي پاليسيون policies اڻڄاڻن ۽ نادانن جي هٿن ۾ رهنديون. پَنَ نِصابي ڪتابن سان گڏوگڏ ادبي، تاريخي، سياسي، سماجي، اقتصادي، سائنسي ۽ ٻين ڪتابن کي پڙهي سماجي حالتن کي بهتر بنائڻ جي ڪوشش ڪندا.

پڙهندڙ نَسُل جا پَنَ سيني کي **چو، چالاءِ ۽ ڪيئن** جهڙن سوالن کي هر بَيانَ تي لاڳو ڪرڻ جي ڪوشش ڏين ٿا ۽ انهن تي ويچار ڪرڻ سان گڏ جوابَ ڳولڻ کي پنهنجو حق، فرض ۽ اڻٽر گهرج unavoidable necessity سمجهندي ڪتابن کي پاڻ پڙهڻ ۽ وڌ کان وڌ ماڻهن تائين پهچائڻ جي ڪوشش جديد ترين طريقن وسيلي ڪرڻ جو ويچار رکن ٿا.

توهان بہ پڙهڻ، پڙهائڻ ۽ ڦهلائڻ جي اِن سهڪاري تحريڪ ۾ شامل ٿي سگهو ٿا. بَس پنهنجي اوسي پاسي ۾ ڏِسو، هر قسم جا ڳاڙها توڙي نيرا، ساوا توڙي پيلا پن ضرور نظر اچي ويندا.

وڻ وڻ کي مون ياکِي پائي چيو تہ ”منهنجا ياءُ
پهتو منهنجي من ۾ تنهنجي پَنَ پَنَ جو پڙلاءُ“.
- اياز (ڪي جو بيجل بوليو)